MARCH 1957

COMMENTARY

The United States and Israel — HAL LEHRMAN

Poland and the Jewish Remnant — LUCJAN BLIT

Program for a European Settlement — HUGH SETON-WATSON

The Lubovitcher Movement: I — HERBERT WEINER

Jordan: Rise and Fall of a Squirearchy — RAY ALAN

The Tobacconist—A Story — DANNIE ABSE

Neo-Conservatism and American Literature — RICHARD CHASE

The Lost Children—A Poem — JACOB SLOAN

From the American Scene
A Suburban Note — SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

Cedars of Lebanon
Letter to a Yiddish Dramatist

On the Horizon
Organization Men — ROBERT LEKACHMAN

The Study of Man
Freud, Religion, and Social Reality — WILL HERBERG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Leslie A. Fiedler — Werner Cohn — Clement Greenberg
Jakob J. Petuchowski — H. R. Trevor-Roper

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

50c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keep your baby "Socially Acceptable" TRADE MARK in Playtex® baby pants!

MORE MOTHERS BUY PLAYTEX THAN ANY OTHER BRAND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

The Tortuous Path of Compromise

HAL LEHRMAN

ISRAEL has emerged from a month of agonizing maneuver almost as dramatic and conceivably as perilous as the month of her birth. In May 1948, the infant state fought for her life against five invading Arab armies—whose skill and spirit, as the test of battle was soon to reveal, had been grossly overrated. But in February of 1957, Israel stood at desperate odds with her truest friend and greatest benefactor, the United States of America—who possessed the incontestable power, if she chose to exert it, to transform benefactions into sanctions and sorely wound Israel, if not destroy her.

As this survey went to press, the two governments (with the United Nations in the wings) had reached agreement, at long last, and were drafting, word by word, the texts of declarations designed publicly to extricate them from the deadly impasse at which they had arrived over the dilemmas of the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba. Pressures on both sides were intense: on the regime of David Ben Gurion, because President Eisenhower as a last resort had thrown into the scales the weight of his unprecedented personal popularity and summoned the American people, in effect, to choose between Israel and himself; on the Eisenhower administration, because Congress and the country were unmistakably—even deafeningly—opposed to the immorality of invoking sanctions against Israel so long as more flagrant and greater transgressors of UN resolutions such as Egypt, India, and the Soviet Union went unchallenged. Negotiations had been further complicated by the need to "save face," with each disputant committed to mutually exclusive positions which, on the surface, defied compromise.

Yet it already seemed clear that Israel, though obtaining considerably less than she first had required, was winning vastly more than the U. S. had first been willing to cede. In retrospect, it was now apparent, the American retreat had set in when, tentatively laying down the sanctions-loaded club waved over Israel's head in January to compel her "unconditional withdrawal" from territory still occupied after the Sinai "aggression," the U. S. in early February had begun to explore with Israel the possible "conditions" for such withdrawal. This move at last took the Israeli-Egyptian dispute out of the UN. It was precisely what Israeli diplomacy had hoped would happen. As long as the dispute was locked up in the General Assembly, only the Arabs could benefit from the juridical confusions and technical moralities of the debate. Frank intervention

---

HAL LEHRMAN's reporting on the Middle East has won him the 1957 George Polk Memorial Award for "distinguished achievement in journalism," in the category of Best Foreign Reporting. Many of Mr. Lehrman's articles on Israel and the Middle East have appeared in the pages of COMMENTARY, as our readers know; others were printed in the *Reporter* and the *New York Times Magazine*. Mr. Lehrman is a lecturer as well as writer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the U. S. was far more likely to achieve a realistic, viable settlement. By the month's end it was evident that:

—While Israel had not gotten specific legal "guarantees" *prior* to withdrawal, her stubborn insistence on assurances against renewed Egyptian belligerency had been vindicated.

—Standing doggedly on what she felt was right when nearly the entire world was prodding her to fall back, Israel had won the understanding of many UN members; obtained a solemn UN affirmation that—as Israel had tirelessly pleaded—her withdrawal and her security were part and parcel of the same Gaza-Aqaba problem; overtaken Egypt in the contest for public—as distinguished from governmental—opinion in the free world; given global publicity to her desire for peace in contrast to Egypt's belligerent posture, and inspired nearly universal admiration by simply refusing to yield to an Egyptian arrogance before which more powerful states had already bowed.

—As a result, a subtle but vital change in climate had occurred: the doctrinal fiction dominating previous U. S. and UN positions had faded; not Israel but Egypt was now tacitly being recognized as the major aggressor in the past, against whom safeguards would need to be taken in the future.

—Avoiding "guarantees" in the strict legalist sense, the U. S.—through declarations by the President, by the Secretary of State, and in and out of the Senate and House by leaders of *both* political parties—had nevertheless given assurances concerning Israel's security tantamount to solemn commitments, from which this nation could not recede tomorrow without prejudicing the value of its pledged word and the level of its world prestige and influence.

A GREAT blunder, it was now evident, had been committed last November when the United States—moving for once with decision, but in the wrong direction—had rushed to the rescue of Gamal Abdel Nasser. This is now the opinion of many American and other observers. Israeli action in Sinai—and even Anglo-French action in Suez, if given more time—would have cut the Egyptian dictator down to size or toppled him altogether. In one stroke, the Suez Canal would have been freed, Western Europe liberated from its dependence for oil on Nasser's caprice, the Arab world relieved of a self-anointed leader whose ambition and appetite had grown too great even for his confederates, and the democratic world rid of Moscow's chief instrument—deliberate or unwitting—in the Middle East. Had John Foster Dulles not wrapped himself and the President—and Nikita Khrushchev—in the banner of the UN, behaving as if there were no Soviet threat in the Middle East but only an Anglo-French-Israeli one, there would have been no need two months later for an Eisenhower Doctrine proclaiming the opposite.

Though nearly everyone except Arabs and the Soviet bloc agreed that the unworkable pre-Sinai arrangements must not be reconstructed, the weight and majesty of the UN had thereafter been applied to the mere elimination of the results of "aggression" rather than to the prevention of further hostilities. The "conscience of the world" had seemed bent on restoring that original Israeli-Egyptian armistice whose abject failure had led to the Sinai conflict in the first place.

The U.S. was still solicitous to preserve the appearance that "crime does not pay." But the U.S. objective had now shifted from a paper armistice to effective non-belligerence —from the punishment of "crime" to elimination of its causes.

Under this heading, four major opportunities lay ready to be grasped: neutralization of the Sinai peninsula to prevent its becoming a Soviet base; reduction of the value of the Suez Canal as Nasser's weapon against Israel and the West; unrestricted maritime access to Elath; prevention of renewed *fedayeen* raids from Gaza.

The elimination of Sinai as a trouble spot seemed least in need of diplomatic ingenuity. Most close observers felt that the military logic inherent in the situation there would facilitate a solution. Nasser's attempt to stock Sinai with Soviet arms and "crack" Egyptian troops had ended in disaster, despite tolerably good communications. All the Egyptian military installations in the peninsula now lay demolished. Nasser would not be eager in the next months to commit any new Soviet weapons or reorganized troops—fresh or "veteran"—to what had become more of a trap for him than ever. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emptiness in the north of the peninsula could serve, on the other hand, as a useful buffer. If anything, it was guessed, Nasser would welcome the extended residence there of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) as further insulation against the Israelis.

THE Suez problem, on the other hand, appeared as elusive as it was crucial. There was widespread agreement that Nasser must under no circumstances be permitted to remain in a position to control factory output, automobile traffic, and room temperatures in Glasgow, Antwerp, or Stockholm. Either a better jurisdiction of the Canal had to be devised, or else the world's dependence on it had to be reduced, or even perhaps entirely eliminated.

In a few weeks, the Canal would be sufficiently cleared to let smaller ships through. It was essential before then to extract some kind of working agreement from Cairo—a decision, at least, on whether Egypt or a UN administration, or the World Bank, or some other international agency should collect the tolls and determine the priority of ships seeking passage. Otherwise, what persuasion could work on Nasser that had not worked from July to October? Meanwhile Nasser was stalling on negotiations, and even stalling on the clearance work, obviously in order to exert pressure in the Aqaba-Gaza dispute. In effect, this violated the spirit of the "Six Principles" which were decreed by the UN last October as a basis for negotiations and which emphasized that Canal operation "shall be insulated from the politics of any country." Nasser, in fact, was now saying the Anglo-French invasion had nullified the "Six Principles" altogether.

At the turn of the year, French Foreign Minister Pineau had urged Mr. Dulles to seek action on Suez from UN Secretary General Hammarskjold, and Mr. Dulles had promised to do so. An Anglo-Franco-Norwegian-American plan, long in the making but delayed by hesitations in Washington, was finally submitted to Mr. Hammarskjold late in February for relay to Cairo. It gingerly proposed that, for the time being, tolls should be collected by an outside agency while Egypt continued to operate the Canal.

For any acceptable long-term solution a firm tone toward Nasser by the UN Secretariat, reinforced by a firm tone toward both by Washington, was clearly called for. It was observed that Mr. Hammarskjold had a greater moral right, and Mr. Dulles was in a better tactical position, to prod Nasser. After all, the Canal had been *closed,* and the UN was *reopening* it. Surely this gave the UN some rights of supervision. Moreover, the U.S. was advancing the largest part of the preliminary clearance costs, which would require at least $20 million. How could these funds be redeemed unless the Canal were fully and profitably used? Complete restoration, followed by a program of modernization such as was required to permit the Canal to handle larger ships—a program that might take as much as eight years—would need up to $200 million. That kind of money could come only from American sources. Surely this gave the U.S. not only influence, but a stake, in securing an arrangement satisfactory to the Canal's users and designed to produce enough revenue for recovery of investment.

Nor could Nasser himself stay tough forever, with his assets frozen, the cities along the Canal dead, their bazaars deserted, the tourists gone, and income depleted. He desperately needed the Canal dues—and the user countries could withhold these until a settlement protecting all countries from willful Egyptian discrimination was reached. The discrimination once felt by Israel alone was now felt universally. It did not therefore seemed unrealistic to suggest that a majority of the Canal's users, led or supported by the U.S., could work out a permanent solution (guaranteeing, among other things, equal treatment for Israel in a Canal restored by *world* effort), deliver it to Mr. Hammarskjold accompanied by vigorous instructions —or hand it to Nasser directly—and press for reasonable satisfaction.

From another point of view, however, might not the entire Canal problem have become less burning, in the long run, as a consequence of Nasser's interference? Indeed, had he perhaps not succeeded in killing the Suez goose that laid golden eggs?

Already a program of super-tankers was well under way. Eventually, the extra capacity of such ships would equalize the extra cost of the long route from the Persian Gulf to Europe around the Cape of Good Hope.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oil companies were considering a "crash program"—if Nasser held out—for a pipeline debouching at the Turkish port of Alexandretta on the Mediterranean and reaching back on the Turkish side of the Syrian border to the Kirkuk oilfields in Iraq, and perhaps beyond to the fields in Iran. And the Israelis were already laying a pipeline from Elath which was due to reach Beersheba in March, and the Mediterranean at Sukreir, near ancient Ascalon, a few weeks later. It was only an 8-inch pipe, and even when extended to the refinery at Haifa it would scarcely supply much more than Israel's own needs. But it blazed the trail for a bigger line and solved the technical difficulties which that would involve; the French were arranging the financing of a 16-inch pipe that would use the same route and the same pumping stations; and there was already talk of a 32-inch pipe. At the same time one heard of a drive to step up research in Western Europe in order to replace oil with atomic energy as the major source of power.

All this might or might not bring Nasser to reason. His own experts—some of whom had already visited the U.S. in search of capital—could be expected to impress upon him the gravity of his economic position. He might even try to bargain: promises of an era of sweetness and light at Suez in return for shelving the plans for new pipelines. But in any case, the Canal's old importance was dwindling.

Oil and commerce were the main reasons for Israel's refusal to get out of Aqaba. The Egyptian guns at Sharm el Sheikh, now spiked, had dominated the narrow Strait of Tiran which was the only passage for tankers carrying oil from the east and south to Israel's embryonic southern port at Elath, and for ships from Elath to Africa and Asia. If Elath became an alternative to Suez for Western Europe's oil, Israel would count immeasurably more in global economic and diplomatic calculations. Their stake in free passage through the Tiran Strait was simply too huge, the Israelis felt, to risk in exchange for a pat on the head by the UN or even by the President of the United States.

In a sense, Israelis privately conceded, there was no danger the Egyptians could ever again throttle Elath even if Israel did obey the UN injunction to clear out unconditionally. After the licking the Egyptian garrison at the tip of Sinai had taken, and now that the Israelis had warships in the Gulf of Aqaba, Nasser would have difficulty finding new soldiers—and especially new officers—to station in isolated Sharm el Sheikh and on the islands guarding the Gulf's mouth. More important, he knew that the first shell fired at an Israeli ship in the Gulf would precipitate another Israeli attack—and another defeat for Egypt. Presumably, therefore, he would lie low. Still, Israel was reluctant to depend on Nasser's good sense for the security of her communications with half the globe. Nor did she want another conflict in an area where none would be able to prove who fired the first shot, with the result that she might once again be stigmatized as an "aggressor." Better to stand firm now, she reasoned, until the world itself ratified her right to passage through the Strait of Tiran.

"If Washington invited American Export or any other American line to put one ship on an Elath-East African run," an authoritative Israeli told this writer weeks ago, "we would be glad to quit Sharm el Sheikh the day it entered the Gulf. Nasser may be crazy with power—but not crazy enough to shoot at an American ship. Once you notify him that the freedom of Aqaba waters is an American interest, we can relax. When Nasser began blacklisting American ships going to Israel, the United States could have stopped him in his tracks by putting him on notice that such discrimination would not be tolerated."

The Aqaba problem, in the Israeli view, had always been one of confirming the Gulf's international character and Israel's right of "innocent passage" through it so indisputably that even Egypt would have to honor it. As long as Mr. Hammarskjold kept reporting, with State Department approval, that this right was a juridical matter which some court some day would have to resolve, Israel was left in the status of a plaintiff sustaining continuous injury and looking high and low for a judge whose verdict, if favorable, would be scorned anyhow by the assailant. But now, at last, the U. S. seemed to be saying in effect that the Gulf was an international waterway free to all—which presumably meant that, if Egypt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objected, *she* would have to find a court to take her case to.

Final settlement at Aqaba involved withdrawal of Israeli forces in favor of UN forces and clear affirmation by the U.S., France, and other maritime powers that the Gulf and Straits must be opened to all comers. More important than the affirmations were the inferences: if the world henceforth regarded these waters as international, and Egypt flouted this opinion, then Israel would be entitled—in defense of her sovereign rights and even in conformity with the UN Charter—to take robust measures against the transgressor. In other words, Nasser would be left to face Israel quite alone. Of all conceivable restraints, this was sure to be the most persuasive for the Egyptian dictator, who already had ample evidence to assess his prospects of surviving another such encounter.

Gaza was a more difficult legal case for Israel to argue than Aqaba, and one on which she was likely to receive smaller assurances of security. At Aqaba there was only water and desert, a solid brief in international law, and no vexing Armistice lines. But the Gaza Strip had several hundred thousand Arabs, land of some value, and was an area supposed by the Armistice to be under Egyptian occupation. Retention of it by Israel would look suspiciously like that "Zionist expansionism" which Arab propaganda had been incessantly denouncing.

To Secretary General Hammarskjold, Gaza was an open and shut legal case. Israeli military *and* civil administration must withdraw forthwith, as several UN resolutions had decreed, and the Egyptian presence reestablished after UNEF certification of Israel's departure. Admittedly, it would be desirable for UNEF to linger on in Gaza. But this would mean expanding UNEF's functions, revising the Armistice, and changing Gaza's civil status—all of which would require Egypt's consent. Would Nasser give it? Mr. Hammarskjold was asking Israel to take the chance.

For a time the U.S. had acted evasively on the Gaza question, paying lip service to the view of many UN members that the old irritants to Egyptian-Israeli peace should not be restored, but endorsing the Hammarskjold doctrine that Egypt had to agree to any and every change in the old arrangements. But by the end of February, the strategy was to seek a UN take-over on the basis of existing authorization instead and allow the natural needs of the area to facilitate the development of a *de facto* UN-Israeli collaboration which would leave the question of Egyptian "status" conveniently hanging in air. With some shrewd modifications, this appeared to be an outgrowth of ingenious State Department proposals which had been reportedly shaping up for some time, based on the following reasoning:

The fact that fedayeen might operate from Gaza was no excuse for Israel's holding the Strip by force. Fedayeen also operated from Jordan. Did that mean Israel was entitled to take Jordan? Or Syria? Israel could never hope to soften Arab hatred by grabbing pieces of Arab territory. That way lay endless enmity, the economic waste of perpetual military preparedness, and a garrison state. It did not matter that Gaza had never been sovereign Egyptian soil. Egypt's hold on Gaza was as solidly confirmed by the Armistice as Israel's on Jaffa or Nazareth, which had not been sovereign Israeli soil either in 1947 and had likewise been occupied in the course of the post-Partition war.

Nevertheless, Egyptian return to Gaza now would be perilous to peace, this reasoning conceded. At one time it might have been possible to keep her out of there entirely. For two years before Israel's attack, Nasser had been saying confidentially that he was prepared to write off Gaza in the event of trouble in Sinai. Now his lines of communication with Gaza had vanished. The Strip with its destitute population and its lack of economic resources had always been a burden to Cairo anyway. Nasser would hardly relish taking it up again. Besides, its Egyptian administrative system had been wholly wrecked.

But there was now the question of Oriental face and Arab "honor." Egypt's presence in Gaza would somehow have to be "restored." Why not in a little house somewhere in Gaza, it was suggested, with a green Egyptian flag bravely flying overhead, and a "governor" inside with plenty of gold braid and some such vital task as the registration of births? An outpouring

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of news photographs in the Arab press would show the triumphal Egyptian "return." In the meantime a *de facto* UN trusteeship would have taken over from the Israelis and commenced the actual administration. Such an arrangement would also save the General Assembly's face and even Mr. Hammarskjold's.

The latter had recommended UNEF's establishment on *both* sides of the Negev line at Auja to supervise compliance with the Armistice. By extension, UNEF could reinforce the UN's Truce Observer corps (UNTSO) *around* Gaza as well. A long-standing resolution empowered a UN agency (UNRWA) to look after the Gaza refugees. The director of this agency had already reported that, in view of the destruction of Sinai bridges, rails, and roads, he would have to supply Gaza through Israel for some time to come. The General Assembly might produce a new resolution authorizing Mr. Hammarskjold to create a civil mission (UNRWA-UNEF), supervised by himself, which would "assist" in the replacement of the Israeli administration —and in fact run the territory. Simultaneously a military mission (UNEF-UNTSO) could be posted to the Gaza area to maintain the cease-fire and insure observance of the Armistice (exactly as prescribed in the original November 2 resolution establishing UNEF), thereby effectively policing the area against fedayeen activity. All this while the Egyptian "governor" would be vigorously stamping birth certificates in his headquarters with the green flag—and everybody would be happy.

EVERYBODY but the Israelis. Their ultimate agreement to any degree of UN power in Gaza represented a large concession. They remained acutely skeptical of the ability of any conglomerate international police force to keep the lid on a fedayeen underground in teeming Gaza.

Almost they preferred having the Egyptians back in Gaza; "Then, if fedayeen came over, we would have the Egyptians to hit back at." But how fight an international police for failing to do an impossible job? And the job, in the Israeli view, was decidedly impossible.

Allied occupation forces during World War II had found it desperately hard to restrain black markets and crime in European enemy countries where streets had names, and houses numbers, and the inhabitants could be more or less differentiated by the European eye. But UNEF, speaking a half-dozen languages, had some contingents, like the Yugoslavs, that were politically pro-Arab, and others who were emotionally involved, already sporting Nasser badges. Columbians or Danes were less biased, but how could they hope to keep effective check on a narrow strip of land peopled by 300,000 people? How would they even be able to tell Achmed from Mustafa and Mustafa from Mohammed, to say nothing of tracking down the agents of the Grand Mufti and the commanders of the murder squads with which Gaza soon would be infested? How, indeed, could such a monstrous security problem possibly be managed without complete administrative liaison between the Strip and the Israeli hinterland which would be the target of fedayeen operations? Proof already existed, the Israelis charged, that UNEF could only shield the fedayeen: Gaza under Israel's control was quiet, but murder gangs were already in operation again from UN-occupied El Arish in Sinai.

The natural connections of the Strip with the country bordering it on two sides gave the Israelis their chief argument for wanting to retain civil control even if, as they proposed, their soldiers departed. In private, they would admit that this program sounded bizarre, even presumptuous, on paper. But on the scene, they said, it happened to be the only workable plan, even for Gaza's Arabs. Here was a tiny, impoverished, and overcrowded patch of territory that nobody wanted—not Egypt, and not even Israel, except in order to avert the threat it contained to Israeli security.

Get away from the documents-and-resolutions world of the UN and look at geography and demography, one would be invited by Israeli interlocutors: you will find that all Gaza's roads lead to Israel, all its land joins Israel's. On the other side there is nothing but rock and desert. Egypt is far away; Israel begins just beyond the demarcation line. Egypt did nothing for Gaza's people except to recruit assassins from among them. For a half-century before Israel was born, the Gaza Arabs lived with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the "accursed Zionists"—and never with the Egyptians.

"Is the UN interested in Gaza as an abstract diplomatic question or as a problem of human beings?" the Israeli argument continued. "If we are compelled to withdraw our civil administrators, all the gains the Gaza inhabitants have made through us—even in such elementary matters as water, electricity, and sanitation—will be lost. Even Gaza's orange groves merge with ours. Economic cooperation between us is the key to the Strip's survival—and to the security problem it involves. And it would give the Arabs a positive reason for keeping the peace. That's why we ask to remain. We are even prepared to take back some of the 200,000 refugees and relieve the awful congestion in the Strip. Gaza is a Skid Row on our doorstep. It has to be made liveable for its people, for their sake and ours. We don't want any colonies. But neither can we ignore Gaza's fate and leave it to fester and provoke another war with Egypt. On the exact nature and form of Gaza's future regime we will cooperate to the maximum with UN investigators and custodians. But we cannot permit a belligerent Egypt to re-enter a territory to which she has forfeited whatever rights she may have had by violation of her Armistice contract. So far as we are concerned Egypt's rule in Gaza is finished. That chapter is closed."

It was no exaggeration to say that such Israeli views on Gaza, as well as Israel's attitudes toward the Aqaba, Sinai, and Suez problems, met with considerable understanding and sympathy in official American circles. There was little disposition to deny that the measures advocated by the Israelis, if carried out in the right way, would improve security in the Middle East, thereby helping the U.S. as well as Israel.

Differences of opinion between Israelis and Americans had arisen, however, not over what was desirable but what was *possible* in the light of the other obligations the U. S. felt she had in the Middle East and in the world. The Eisenhower administration regarded the Israeli proposals as so many tempting but forbidden fruits to be plucked only at peril of justifying brutal aggression, outraging "the opinions of mankind," and alienating the Arab world.

In the past two months, disagreement had been so bitter that Israeli-American relations could hardly have been worse. Mr. Dulles spoke with rare brusqueness to pro-Israeli Americans who came to plead with him. He made certain observations to an Israeli cabinet minister which, coming from a member of one friendly government to a member of another, could only be described as extraordinary. He even found it possible to intimate to the American people that American sanctions might be leveled against Israel should she remain defiant of UN and U. S. demands.

Indeed, many friends of Israel felt the administration had already imposed partial economic sanctions following the Sinai invasion. But State Department circles poohpoohed this charge. The ban against travel and economic aid, one was told, was being applied impartially to Israel, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. It had cost the American taxpayer an estimated $3 million, plus wear and tear on the military establishment, to evacuate American nationals from the war zone. Until the danger of renewed hostilities had vanished, it would be irresponsible to permit the resumption of tourist travel. True, only six of the thirty-six members of the Four Point Mission staff who had been in Israel before October 29 were there now, but a similar cut had been made in the mission to Egypt.

As for direct economic aid, it was asserted, nothing promised Israel had been withheld. Shipments under the development and technical assistance programs scheduled for 1956-57—which envisaged a total of $25 million in goods—had reached $20 million as of January 31, over $2 million of it shipped *after* Sinai. Nearly $28 million in agricultural commodities for sale to Israel had been delivered. True, $27 million in development grants and technical aid for the new fiscal year (1957-58) had been suspended—but this sum had merely represented a tentative program and had not yet been officially apportioned to Israel at the time of the Sinai attack. "You can't call it sanctions," one American official protested to me, "when you simply stop giving things away."

To those concerned for Israel's economic welfare, however, the impact and purpose of American behavior could not be dismissed so easily. To some, it looked like a clear at-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tempt to apply pressure. Travel prohibitions were inflicting hardship on numerous Israeli-American families and interfering with the American personnel of Israeli institutions. Valuable foreign exchange was being lost to Israel because of the virtual disappearance of tourists. (Jerusalem's spacious King David Hotel had gone out of business.) At American ports, where Israeli interests were involved, officials were now examining shipping documents, cargo limits, and other minutiae with unprecedented bureaucratic zeal. In Washington the Commerce Department, which had previously been handling export licenses for Israel routinely, was now "clearing" interminably with the State Department on materials vital to Israel's industry and civilian economy. Private American banks hitherto ready to offer or renew profitable loans which Israel had always serviced punctiliously were now holding back—obviously for reasons other than financial. (One such case involved an immediate $20 million on which the Israeli Treasury had been counting.) An Export-Import Bank mission to investigate a projected fresh $75 million loan had never left for Israel.

Nor, it was charged, had the U. S. taken equal "sanctions" against the Arabs. There had been no 1956 "Mutual Security" aid program at all for Egypt, hence far less to close down there. Because of the "decimation" of the U. S. technical mission in Israel, important projects were piling up without attention, and more than fifty million Israeli pounds in "counterpart" funds from transactions under various American programs were stagnating, though already anticipated by hard-pressed budgets. A new and sorely needed agricultural surplus program, involving up to $70 million, was lying dormant. The 1957-58 grant-in-aid was, strictly speaking, not yet in arrears, but there had been legitimate expectations of an earlier start than usual for the coming fiscal year, and the delay was threatening all budgetary calculations. Far from being merely "tentative," the new "country program" had been approved by the International Cooperation Administration, it was claimed, and Israel so notified; an agreement negotiated between the U. S. mission and the Israeli government had actually been forwarded by the former to Washington for signature—which was still being withheld. The American hold-back policy, it was bitterly asserted, was retarding the importation into Israel of necessities, not luxuries, and the gap would have to be filled by purchases elsewhere. "It isn't that the U. S. has just stopped 'giving things away,'" one was told, "not when we have been encouraged to make such 'things' a vital part of our economic planning. And especially not when the cut-off comes just as we get deluged by large-scale immigration and are making a massive humanitarian effort which in the past the U. S. has always helped but is now hindering."

It was interesting, and instructive for future reference, to hear the grievances entertained against the Israelis in candid conversations in the vicinity of the State Department in and around early February.

One persistent complaint concerned the lack of Israeli "cooperativeness." In public utterances, I was told, the Israelis conveyed a zeal for compromise and peace—but in closeted diplomatic conference they presented demands rather than suggested solutions. They did not bring in proposals that might "get us off the hook." They seemed to think that it was up to somebody else to work out formulas; what they were asking appeared so eminently reasonable in their own eyes that any modification of it seemed unreasonable and malign.

The Israelis also assumed, it was said, that the U. S. must necessarily be partial to their case. They waxed indignant when we showed any interest in the Arabs. Some years back, they kicked up a furor when the U. S. decided to give arms to Iraq for purposes of regional defense, and Israel made a massive raid on Gaza to show us she was a stronger military power than Iraq. They lacked the detachment to see that the U. S. had to get along with the Arabs too. In the Gaza-Aqaba argument, their assumption that we ought to favor them was particularly shortsighted. If Washington became identified with either side, it would lose all influence—and all possibility of ever bringing about a just settlement.

The Department, it appeared, was especially incensed over the Israeli propaganda. (Around this time, violent explosions against Mr. Dulles were going off in the Senate.) The Israelis had put across the myth, it was asserted, that they were the injured

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

party, practicing an angelic patience for eight long years under the assaults of the Arabs. Actually, according to the American view, Ben Gurion's policy of massive retaliation had set off the cycle of bloody raids. More Arabs than Israelis had died in these exchanges. Sheer iteration of the contrary by the Israelis and their friends, Ambassador Eban's avowedly brilliant speech in the General Assembly right after the Sinai invasion, and a concentrated barrage of propaganda ever since had actually created the illusion that Israel was the injured party in Sinai. The plain fact of the matter (again according to the State Department) was that Israel was the deliberate aggressor. We know her frustrations with Egypt, and one might be able to excuse the attack, but we cannot justify it.

Departmental annoyance was expressed most sharply at the press uproar in support of Israel's demands for guarantees in Gaza and Aqaba. The heavy propaganda pressure made the American administration look bitter and grudging toward Israel—or compelled it to adjust its policy. ("We don't enjoy being unpopular," one informant admitted.) To the extent that the U. S. departed from her impartiality by seeming to bend to the Israeli-provoked storm in the newspapers, she lost bargaining power in her efforts to find a solution.

LIKE it or not, it had been said, one could not make any progress by insisting on pure abstract justice. One had to proceed from the practical possibilities of a concrete situation. Washington's long-range objective was to get Israel and her neighbors to agree on boundaries, obtain a settlement of all issues which the UN would ratify, and then stand firm against any future violator of that settlement. But the immediate need was to reestablish at least the *modus vivendi* of the original armistices, and to proceed from there. Premier Ben Gurion declared the armistice with Egypt void because Nasser had not respected it, but at the same time tried to deny belligerent rights to Egypt. The Israelis were not sincere; they kept offering to negotiate with the Arabs, but only for propaganda effect, since they well knew the Arabs would not negotiate. They scorned the value of a promise from Nasser, yet said they were willing to sign a non-aggression pact with him and quit Gaza and Aqaba on the strength of it.

Worst of all, according to this indictment, the Israelis were working against their own interests by their refusal to evacuate conquered territory unconditionally. They professed to desire security—but they were insisting on a political victory first of all, one which they could not possibly obtain, and were thereby destroying all their chances for security.

The Egyptians, according to the American view, could not be pressured into any commitments before Israeli withdrawal. They were not unwilling to see UNEF's functions expanded. Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi had indicated as much. (Two days after I was told this, Mr. Fawzi in the General Assembly announced that UNEF's only function was to watch the Israelis leave.) The Egyptians knew they would have to yield something—but it wouldn't be because the Israelis had forced them to! Many of the other Arabs and the Asians would look favorably on proposals to enlarge UNEF's role—*after* Israeli withdrawal. We are asking Israel for a pledge of faith that would be redeemed within perhaps not more than twenty-four hours: we are asking her to get out so that the General Assembly can then act immediately to prevent the attacks about which she complains. Naturally, the U. S. cannot *guarantee* anything. We can't tell the UN what to do. But we *know* that, unless Israel makes the first concession, she will never have security. In the eyes of the Arab-Asian world, to grant Israel a prior commitment on the political changes she desired, and then to enforce these guarantees with an expanded UNEF, would be allowing an aggressor to make conditions—it would be rewarding aggression. The foundations of the UN would be undermined if it abetted such cynicism—and the U. S. is dedicated to supporting and not undermining the UN.

Israelis and their advocates, whose numbers were increasing daily, had found the "moral" basis of these American arguments dubious in the extreme. It seemed a strange doctrine that required the UN to assent to illegal blockade and fedayeen action in order to demonstrate its morality. The case was eloquently stated in a New York *Times* editorial: ". . . if the UN should compel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Israel to withdraw without guarantees, it would . . . put itself in the ludicrous position of backing Egypt in rejecting peace and maintaining a state of war in defiance of its own character and resolutions."

Critics pointed out that the record of the U. S. herself in the UN debate over Sinai was disquieting in its inconsistency. Ambassador Lodge had announced one morning that General Assembly demands on Israel were only "hortatory and recommendatory"; that same afternoon—reportedly, after the Arab bloc had set King Saud to prodding his White House host, with the Dhahran air base as the poker—he announced that Israel's refusal to obey the General Assembly might have grave consequences. In the middle of January the U. S. expressed belief that Mr. Hammarskjold's mandate from the Assembly included the power to use UNEF for the achievement of a settlement in Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba after Israeli withdrawal; late in January, the U. S. hailed a report by Mr. Hammarskjold that UNEF could be so used only if Egypt agreed beforehand. In early February, when a pair of vague resolutions on withdrawal and peace efforts were voted, Mr. Lodge led off by implying that they meant the UNEF might play a capital role in the solution of the disputes. Egypt's Fawzi then said UNEF was not in Egypt "to resolve any question or solve any problem," but exclusively to secure Israeli retreat; India's Krishna Menon said he agreed with Mr. Fawzi; winding up, Mr. Lodge vaguely agreed with Mr. Menon. Nor, it was recalled, had the U. S. done anything concrete during all these years of Egyptian indifference to UN injunctions which Washington was now proclaiming as mandatory. As late as mid-February, the President himself had publicly exposed his unawareness that such UN resolutions against Egypt even existed! Under such circumstances, were not Israel's hesitations understandable?

Why, it was asked, must Israel be the test by which the UN stands or falls? The UN had apparently survived greater affronts. Egypt herself had flouted UN resolutions; the Security Council had *ordered* a plebiscite in Kashmir, yet India had disdained to comply. The Soviets had shot up Budapest, before and after UN resolutions, yet the delegates had continued sitting with the Soviet representatives on 42nd Street. Could it be that Israel was important just because she was small and weak: because if the UN could not beat *her* down, then the UN was indeed finished?

To many, it seemed that the U. S. was making a serious error in laying the emphasis she did on Arab-Asian good will and on the UN as the basis of American policy. "Anti-colonialism" had become such a fetish, it was said, that nobody dared raise his voice any more to suggest that any former colonial territory was not *ipso facto* always in the right. If the U. S. depended on the UN as the effective channel for action in a tormented world, she would have to do the bidding of the Asians who held the balance of whatever "power" the UN possessed.

Actually, critics of the American argument continued, it approached perilously close to humbug to contend that the UN *must* be arbiter and judge. The UN had never settled, it could not settle, any dispute which a big power did not want it to settle. Even constitutionally, the only real authority possessed by the UN rested in the Security Council—which was dominated by the big powers. With the Council impotent because of the veto, an effort had lately been made to build up the General Assembly—which at best had only the right to recommend, not to order. But a fresh deadlock had developed, this time in the bowels of the Assembly itself, because of the Asia-African-Soviet working alliance and its ability to avert any two-thirds majority. It now seemed as though Washington was seeking to develop the Secretary Generalship as the seat of UN authority. At any rate, the U. S. had repeatedly indicated the great respect she entertained for Mr. Hammarskjold, his opinions, recommendations, and decisions—almost implying at times that these by themselves possessed the force of law.

THE fact of the matter, however, was that the Secretary General had no such authority. His job was really to be a manager only—from cafeteria to Security Council. When his eighty employers agreed, there were clear instructions for him to act on. When they did not agree, he was without instructions. He could not make policies of his own. The sole constitutional initiative he enjoyed under the Charter was to call

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the UN's attention to what he considered dangerous situations.

According to many critics, however, the present Secretary General arbitrarily arrogated power to himself by the way he "interpreted" the instructions to himself in various resolutions. In a sense, defenders of Mr. Hammarskjold could argue, he continued perforce even here only to reflect the will of the great powers—specifically, of the U. S. and the USSR. For whatever he did, he dare not offend either one. (Trygve Lie, Hammarskjold's predecessor, saw his job begin to slip away when he stopped pleasing Moscow.) If so, one might conclude that Washington *approved* of the way he interpreted his instructions. But even this was vastly different from *hiding* behind his interpretations, which was what Washington actually seemed to be doing, and treating them as if they were the sacred commandments of the "conscience of the world" against which Washington dare not remonstrate.

The need to get a two-thirds majority had led to Mr. Hammarskjold's having great leeway in the General Assembly, as that body had recently developed. At each major turn, his critics alleged, he had steered things in the Arab direction. This writer recalls how, after the Assembly voted to create UNEF last November, conjecture in UN corridors focused on the amount of authority the Secretary General would "interpret" the Emergency Force to have. Would he emphasize its mandate to enforce the cease-fire and help settlement of the Suez and Arab-Israeli conflicts, or would he limit UNEF to standing by while the invaders departed? In either case, according to the predictions, it would be hard to find a *two-thirds* majority to overrule him. Mr. Hammarskjold chose to interpret the UNEF's mandate in the narrowest possible sense, and even gave Nasser the right to compel UNEF's departure at his pleasure.

APOLOGISTS for the Secretary General claimed he was under constant pressure from the Arab-Asian bloc, with no counterpressure from the U. S. to help him resist it. Perhaps so, his critics would concede—but the partiality he showed Nasser was so extreme, it was charged, that much more than Arab-Asian pressure was needed to account for it. The UN's moral force had been good enough reason, in his eyes, to require the Israelis (and the British and French) to withdraw—but not good enough reason to impose peace arrangements on Nasser, with or without his consent, after the Israeli withdrawal. Nasser's agreement, he was insisting, must be secured, otherwise the UN would be abusing sovereign rights of a member state. According to undenied report, Nasser had never even agreed to let UNEF in at all; there was said to be no document granting Egyptian consent to this in the UN archives; it appeared the Secretary General had invented the need for Nasser's prior consent, then had proceeded as if he had it, had spread the notion he did have it by reiterating his praise for Cairo's cooperation—and was now again arbitrarily insisting that Nasser would have to consent to the next step too.

Did these antics, sympathizers with Israel inquired, spring from zeal for the Arabs or dislike for the Israelis? Whatever its origin, they charged, a bias clearly existed. It showed itself as long ago as Mr. Hammarskjold's first official visit to the Middle East to mediate an earlier Israeli-Egyptian conflict. He stopped first in Cairo, then sent a message to Prime Minister Ben Gurion. (He could have dispatched it through his own UN establishment, which had representatives in Israel, but he chose to send it through the American embassy, as if to intimidate the Israelis.) He notified Ben Gurion that, after talking to Nasser (and before talking with them), he was convinced that war and peace in the Middle East depended entirely on the Israelis!

Subsequently, Mr. Hammarskjold was not above lobbying against Israel's interests among other member states, it was charged. He actually permitted himself to scold Foreign Minister Pineau when France alone voted with Israel against an anti-Israeli resolution in the General Assembly. He made himself extremely difficult for the Israeli Foreign Minister to find for consultation, but he was not averse to being photographed with the newly arrived delegate of the blood-spattered Hungarian puppet regime. His official reports—written in a masterfully involved language which was becoming known as Dagwidge or Hammartalk—invariably showed coolness toward Israel but a touch-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing regard for Egyptian susceptibilities. At least three months ago Israel had begun requesting him to ask Cairo whether Nasser still felt he was at war with Israel, and whether he intended to renew his blockade and fedayeen operations. Only a day or so ago Israel was still beseeching him to find out if Nasser would claim belligerent rights if Israel should quit Aqaba and Gaza. At no time, however, was Mr. Hammarskjold known to have relayed the question.

On the other hand, it was widely asserted, he had reneged frequently on his own declarations to the Israelis. He had implored them, when he had his hands full in Sinai, not to talk about Gaza—and not to leave it! He had once conceded to the Israelis that the Gulf of Aqaba was an international waterway; now he was arguing that it was a disputable legal question! In December he had favored giving UNEF power to prevent hostilities in the Gulf and the duty of remaining there till the issue was settled; now he was demanding, rather irrelevantly, that Israel must first agree to letting UNEF enter Israeli territory in the Negev!

In view of all this, few objective observers could blame Israel for not hearkening to U. S. entreaties and trusting to Mr. Hammarskjold's good offices. The Israelis contended further, in view of the Secretary General's nostalgia for the old Armistice, that an armistice ceased to exist when it was persistently dishonored—but that its expiration did not automatically mean a state of war. Nor, even, did an armistice permit belligerent rights, as the Egyptians argued. The Israeli-Egyptian Armistice specifically banned hostilities, and the UN Charter itself ruled out belligerency. Nor was Israel's willingness to accept a non-aggression pact with Egypt inconsistent with Israel's lack of confidence in Egyptian pledges, as the Americans argued. Such a pact would signify an important reversal on Nasser's part. Israel would expect the pledge to be spelled out by Egypt before the UN, which could take note of it in a resolution and thus put it solemnly into the record. Then, if the Egyptians violated their promise again, they could be resisted with the backing of the world organization.

The Israelis, moreover, vehemently denied the American assertion that they were jeopardizing their security for the sake of a political triumph. They were not interested in triumphs, the Israelis said, but *only* in security. But they could not jeopardize their very survival when neither the UN nor the U. S. was willing to take any responsibility for Nasser's good behavior. The proof of this, they privately told all who would listen, was that Israel would be satisfied if the U. S. alone publicly guaranteed Aqaba and Gaza. "We would even get out," I was authoritatively informed, "if President Eisenhower—*without* any public declaration—simply told Ben Gurion he did not know how it would be done, but the U. S. would definitely see to it that Israel got the protections she needs. Such a private assurance would be enough for us."

"It's easy to take risks on the thirty-eighth floor of the UN," one was told. (The Secretay General has his offices on that floor.) "We took risks enough on October 29; we risked the lives of thousands of our boys, and exposed our towns and settlements to the danger of attack by Nasser's jet bombers. We do not propose to do that again. It is impossible to produce tranquility by restoring the *status quo ante* in Gaza. Egypt's return there will bring more fedayeen than ever. Nasser can hold 'victory' parades in Cairo—but not in Gaza. The population there saw his defeat with their own eyes. His only possible answer is bigger and better fedayeen operations."

In that event, the Israeli attitude made clear, war would erupt again. The State Department was being implored not to be misled by the past eight years of relative Israeli passivity. "Henceforth a fedayeen assault will be regarded as no less an act of war than a brigade attack." The same would be true in Aqaba. "Never again will an Israeli ship turn back out of Elath," Foreign Minister Golda Meir had notified Mr. Hammarskjold.

This was the mood, not only of the Israeli government and its UN delegation, but of the entire Israeli people. The nation, all evidence indicated, was solidly united. Israel was ready, not only for another Arab war if no other way could assure her survival, but also for something perhaps even graver —sanctions. Instead of anxiety over this possibility, there was quiet readiness. Letters from ordinary Israelis to friends and relatives

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here spoke casually—not with resignation or bitterness, but as a matter of course—of the coming food scarcity. Indeed, there seemed almost an eagerness for sanctions—as if the country were looking forward to the test.

Friend and foe in the UN now knew the extent of Israeli determination; Mr. Hammarskjold knew it; Mr. Dulles knew it. This knowledge had made vastly more difficult the task of those who might still have sought to persuade Israel to yield and, failing that, would urge or permit her condemnation.

Israel's staunch conduct also increased the admiration of sympathetic governments. Certain UN delegates, after voting on instructions from their capitals in favor of another summons to Israel to withdraw, would privately congratulate the Israelis and exhort them *not* to. The British and French seemed almost envious in their appreciation, ruefully meditating on their own over-hasty retreat. The mounting number of those who felt Nasser had gotten away with murder in the UN enjoyed seeing both Nasser and the UN being challenged at last—and by a small nation against whom the cry of "colonialism" could not be raised.

ISRAEL'S stand only intensified the nation-wide support for her in the U. S. She had scored first by her prowess in Sinai. Her exposure of Nasser's hollow boasts and threats had not gone unnoticed. (The greatest single triumph of Israel public relations—whose performance is normally less than brilliant—had been the widely publicized exchange of 5,000 Egyptian prisoners for a total of *four* Israelis.) Her spokesmen's firm explanation of her case on Gaza and Aqaba day after day before the bar of world opinion, even as she was executing her stage-by-stage withdrawal from Sinai in obedience to UN injunctions, had made the reasonableness and justice of her position clear. And now American public opinion was reacting with warm sympathy to her refusal to surrender.

Inevitably, this national groundswell of sentiment washed into the Capitol. The outcry in Senate and House could not be belittled as merely partisan catering to a popular cause. The Israeli crisis formed part of, and gave impetus to, a general revolt against our recent policy in the Middle East—a revolt touched off by the administration's own sudden discovery of the seriousness of a Soviet threat which only a short while before it had denied. Motivations were varied, but the wrath of a Fulbright, a Mansfield, a Morse could not be shrugged away as vote-seeking. The feeling grew in Congress that national interests were being jeopardized—and that even some principles of morality had been violated, or at least abused, by an administration that never ceased to trumpet the righteousness of its foreign policy.

Not since the 1948 life-and-death struggle with the Arabs had Israel stood in higher public esteem in this country. Symptomatic of this was the protest that went up from the heart and center of Republican power, from none other than Senate Minority Leader Knowland and his closest party colleagues, at the first public hint of possible sanctions against her. Newspapers of every persuasion joined in, and a right-wing commentator like Fulton Lewis, Jr., devoted two broadcasts to flaying Dulles for the "obscenity" of dreaming of sanctions against Israel and not against the butchers of Budapest. The Secretary of State's about-face effort to placate Israel followed soon after, to be followed in turn by Mr. Hammarskjold's abrupt realization that sanctions might introduce "new elements of conflict" into an already highly explosive situation. Until the very end, it had remained conceivable that everybody would simply back away from the crisis without settling anything. This had happened at the UN before, even in connection with sonorous resolutions on other Arab-Israeli deadlocks. Time, until the other day, had ratified Egypt's unilateral discrimination against Israel at Suez; time still ratified Israel's possession of one half of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, right up to the last moment before the U.S.-Israeli agreement, one could not entirely discount the threat of sanctions. The psychological pitfalls in the struggle for public favor were deep. If Israel had given the impression of holding out too obdurately against an offer which the President was able to represent to American and world opinion as eminently reasonable, then she could conceivably have lost enough support to make administration backing of UN sanctions publicly possible.

Mr. Dulles still enjoyed a large measure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of immunity from public opinion. Unlimited confidence was still apparently accorded him by a President who himself still felt the sense of historic mission inspired by a landslide personal triumph at the polls. Loud clamor in press, pulpit, party, and Congress could not yet penetrate the armor of such self-confidence. The Secretary of State also had the protection of his own stern conscience, and of a firm faith that its dictates were inspired by a power greater than men. Finally, he did not always consult his own advisers. (If he had talked with Department professionals whose opinions are available to many reporters, he would have learned that, in their informed view at least, sanctions against Israel alone were "unthinkable" because of their essential immorality, and sanctions against both Israel and Egypt for contempt of the UN were "impractical," if only because the Soviets would be delighted at the chance to render them null and void in Nasser's case.)

As for Premier Ben Gurion, the parliamentary situation inside Israel gave him considerably less immunity from a public opinion passionately distrustful of anything short of invulnerable guarantees. Because he was now apparently climbing down from an all-out resistance stand which mainly he himself had brought his people to adopt, the Israeli leader would need all of his customary individual daring and all of his own high prestige to carry cabinet, parliament, and the nation with him.

In the long view, there were signs that, once the dust of the current diplomatic struggle had cleared, relations between the U. S. and Israel would greatly improve. The administration had, after all, moved a considerable distance away from its "surrender-or-else" attitude toward Israel. Another sign was its abandonment of naive anti-colonialism on the Algerian issue; it decisively foiled UN action in that conflict, which would have produced only mischief—here the administration was not afraid to risk the displeasure of the Arab-Asian bloc. A third sign was the evidence, still invisible on the surface but accumulating below, that the Department of State was at last, finally and completely, disenchanted with Israel's arch foe, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The U. S. was not necessarily thirsting for his downfall; perhaps worse might succeed him. But henceforth at least, it seemed, the Department of State would rest no confidence in him—and grant him no concessions of any kind except in return for the hardest of guarantees. The visit of King Saud, and the President's drive for a "baksheesh fund" of $200 million with which to lubricate certain wheels, were not events that advocates of an enlightened American policy could hail with unmixed satisfaction. But they were at least part of a program to isolate Nasser, make him more tractable, and introduce some realism into Washington's efforts to come to grips with the realities of the "mysterious" Orient.

Friends of Israel knew—as did Israel's leaders—that the U. S. must in all her Middle Eastern policies take due account of African and Asian sentiment. As long as Arab-Israeli peace was not achieved, therefore, this nation was bound to have a "split personality." Her policy in the area would necessarily seem to swing now toward one camp, now toward the other. Whatever the name of the Secretary of State at any moment, or indeed whatever the political complexion of the administration, the national policy could not be one-sided: it would have to seek the friendship of both sides.

This, all except the most rabid partisans of Israel understood. One could, however, legitimately hope for less straddling of issues, for less concern to seem agreeable at all times to all men, and for an occasional positive affirmation by this country of her views and intentions, even if that meant the risk of affronting those enemies of Israel whom the U. S. felt she must make her friends. It was even likely that such vigor would make a more salutary impression on Arab peoples and potentates than a timorous policy of conciliation at high prices.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLAND AND THE JEWISH REMNANT

End of a Long History?

LUCJAN BLIT

LONDON

TO VISIT Poland now is to visit tragedy. The scene is bare. Want and penury creep through the streets like yellow smoke over the rubble of a burnt-out house. Yet the human spirit appears triumphant, for it has just won a desperate battle against the Great Lie which for years had been forced on this nation of twenty-seven millions by its mighty neighbor.

Poland, as I saw it recently, is a unique country, where the requirements of common sense go clean against every rule of political logic and every canon of national tradition. For the first time in two decades the January elections to the National Assembly (Sejm) gave people the freedom to reject their rulers by a pencil stroke. Ninety-five per cent of the Poles are anti-Communist, yet during this election they decided, with virtual unanimity, to entrust the government of their country to Wladyslaw Gomulka, the only prominent Communist in present-day Poland.

Gomulka has been a Communist since he was sixteen. He spent years in the prisons of pre-war Poland, where the Communist party was illegal. (In 1938 Stalin finished off the work of the Polish police by killing nearly all the Polish Communist leaders he could lay hands on.) It was the same Gomulka, now the First Secretary of the United Polish Workers (Communist) party, who in 1948 refused to become a puppet of Moscow and was once again imprisoned, this time by the secret police of Communist Poland. Last year he came out of prison and, on the night of October 19, he advised Khrushchev, Molotov, Mikoyan, and Malenkov, who were visiting Warsaw, to leave immediately or suffer the consequences. Soviet tanks then surrounded Warsaw and other Polish cities with a steel ring, but crack units of the Polish army, aroused university students, and workers stood ready too, determined to resist any attack. In the largest Warsaw printing shop a proclamation calling for a national uprising was already in type on the rotary presses, and the signal was being awaited to start printing. That night, the Communist Gomulka won the leadership of a nation that in its overwhelming majority loathes the economic and political ideas for which he has stood all his life.

In Poland today, only one other man equals Gomulka in prestige—Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski. He and Gomulka are the same age, fifty-one. Each has spent nearly four years in Communist prisons. Both are men of rigorous principles and unbending character. Though they belong to rival organizations that are in bitter competition for the souls of men, and have never met personally, they have entered into an unwritten agreement under which the Communist ruler is granted, as temporal Caesar, what is due unto Caesar, and the Roman Church is recognized as the nation's spiritual home. Only amid the ruins of old Warsaw, destroyed in the autumn of 1944 and threatened twelve years later by a repetition of that fate, could this unique concordat

---

LUCJAN BLIT is a free-lance writer and journalist who lives in London. He was born in Warsaw, in 1906, and studied economics and sociology at that city's university before emigrating to England. Among the publications to which he has contributed are the New York *Daily Forward*, the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and the British periodicals, the Manchester *Guardian*, the *Observer*, *Twentieth Century*, and *Socialist Commentary*, of whose editorial board he is a member. This is Mr. Blit's first appearance in COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have been reached between men from such opposing camps.

Ten years ago Gomulka, as leader of his party, was one of the principal founders of the Cominform, and his party still proclaims monolithic Marxism-Leninism to be the tables of its law. Yet in no country is more intellectual energy devoted to the questioning of the philosophical basis of that monolithism than in Poland. The Polish Djilases are not in prison. They speak at party and trade union meetings; they teach at universities; they edit widely circulated papers and magazines. When the Polish writers assembled this past December to announce their rejection of every residue of Zhdanov's "socialist realism," they elected as their new president a poet who, long before October, had openly and defiantly declared himself a "liberal socialist."

They are reading Orwell's *1984* in Warsaw now, partly to compare that grim fantasy with their own hideous yesterday, but even more to feel the joy of having beaten Big Brother and his Big Lie. They believe they have restored the uncorrupted laws of truth. They always pronounce this noun with a capital "T."

Yet Truth, as some of them have already begun to discover, has many and varied faces. Love for one's own people, their political freedom, and their individual culture can only too easily turn into contempt or even hatred for others. In December a Warsaw theater was showing a play, *Mother*, by the Czech writer Karel Capek. Of all the theaters in Warsaw this was the only one that played to an empty house. The Poles had mistaken it for Maxim Gorky's play of the same name. Gorky had been forced down their throats during the past twelve years—so they boycotted poor Capek.

"You also told me that at the Sixth Plenary Meeting [of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers party] Comrade Khrushchev raised the question of Comrade Zambrowski, and that he also raised the Jewish question."

This is quoted from the official minutes of the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the Polish Communist party as published last November in that party's theoretical organ, *Nowe Drogi*. Comrade Ruminski, who spoke these words during a heated exchange with A. Starewicz (a close political friend of Gomulka's), is a leading member of the pro-Moscow faction that was finally routed at this same meeting. Zambrowski ("*Chaver* Rachmiel" in pre-war days) is a prominent Polish Communist, and a Jew. He had closely collaborated with the old party leadership of Stalinist days, but so had Ochab, Zawadski, and many other members of the Polish party's Central Committee who, like him, were now loyally following Gomulka. Yet at this meeting Zambrowski alone was made the target of personal attacks by the pro-Moscow faction, and it was against him that it concentrated its opposition when the new Politburo was being elected. And when in the recent general elections Zambrowski stood as the Communist party's candidate for the Sejm from Lodz, this pro-Moscow, or "Stalinist," group in the party* continued to single him out for fierce attack.

The verbatim report of the Eighth Plenary Meeting is an indispensable guide for those who want to understand the background of the revolt against Moscow carried out by the Polish Communists. The report makes it clear that anti-Semitism is being deliberately exploited by the pro-Moscow minority in the Polish party, which sees in Gomulka an enemy of Soviet Russia and a dangerous deviator from orthodox Communism (especially in the matter of the forced collectivization of land, which he has rejected), and is ready to use any weapon against him and his supporters in order to divert Polish resentment from themselves and from the pre-Gomulka regime.

No less than twelve speakers at the meeting touched on the matter of anti-Semitism. Most of them directly charged Deputy Prime Minister Zanon Nowak, one of the

*Also known as the Natolin group; before October they used to meet at a state farm in Natolin near Warsaw.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leaders of the pro-Moscow faction, with having attempted to launch an anti-Semitic campaign in the party at the previous Plenary Meeting, the Seventh, which had been held just after the Poznan uprising last July. They now condemned Nowak's newest demand, which was to cut down the number of Jews employed in the party and government. Some of the speakers called the proposal an attempt to revive the prewar Polish *numerus clausus* for Jewish high school and university students. Nowak answered that it was "in the best interests of those who are against anti-Semitism."

But when one of Nowak's close collaborators, former Polish Politburo member Kazimierz Mijal, took the floor, he used language identical with that flaunted in Russia in the years 1950-53, when Stalin was liquidating the Jewish members of the Russian party and government. Mijal said: "We must recognize that the enemy and the bigot have joined the process of democratization en masse. It appears that the main centers of radio and party press propaganda are being taken over, against the will of the party and against the vital interests of the party, the working classes, and the people's power, by a degenerate clique of careerists and political gamblers who have nothing in common with the party and the working class. These unprincipled cosmopolites, like cats, are never taken by surprise. In every situation, they always manage to land on their feet—they are, it is said, always first in line, always in the front row. With brazen insolence, and without reason, old revolutionaries and old Communists are now brutally assaulted and branded as 'semi-intellectuals,' 'anti-Semites,' 'conservatives,' 'enemies of democracy,' 'oppressors,' and 'Stalinists.'"

More details about this kind of anti-Semitic agitation were disclosed by the most courageous paper in Poland, the weekly *Po Prostu* (Plain Speaking).* In its issues of January 6 and 13, 1957, it published long lead articles on anti-Semitism in Poland. Among the revelations they contained was that the pro-Moscow group had gone round the country telling party members that the reason for the poverty in which they lived was the "seventy Jewish directors of the State Planning Board," and that the really horrible murders and acts of torture under the previous regime had been committed by the "Jewish heads of the Security Police—the Goldberg-Rozanskis, Swiatlos, Fejgins, and Romkowskis."

Po Prostu gave other examples of the ways in which the Natolin group was trying to use anti-Semitism against Gomulka and his more liberal followers. At a recent conference of the Warsaw District party organization, voices were heard demanding that people of Jewish origin should be made to drop their Polish names (often acquired while in hiding under the Nazi occupation) in order to "make it easier to know who is a Jew and who is not." At a meeting of army officers to select one of themselves as a candidate for the Sejm elections, doubts arose whether "the man chosen was not a Jew." A popular leader of the Warsaw workers, Gozdzik, who played an immense role on the day and night of October 19 in the preparations for resistance to Soviet attack, was accused of being a waverer "because he spent his last vacation in Israel" (which was not true).

The Polish Communist party's Central Committee was obviously so perturbed by the Natolin group's anti-Semitic agitation that, in addition to condemning anti-Semitism in general terms, it called on the Politburo to investigate the question of "right-wing-nationalist deviation" inside the party and report its findings to a future plenary meeting of the Committee.

IN POLAND people now talk freely. Though the censor still watches everything printed and broadcast, even in the newspapers and in radio broadcasts the truth is no longer hidden between the lines or disguised in parables. Patently, the pro-Moscow group

*It is published by a group of undergraduates and recent graduates of Warsaw University. Its 150,000 copies sell out minutes after their appearance on the streets.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has decided to try to dodge responsibility for the past years of terror and economic misery by shifting it on to those "Stalinists" in Poland who happen to be Jews.

During the bleakest Stalinist period, from 1949 to 1954, three men ruled Poland: Boleslaw Bierut, Jacob Berman, and Hilary Minc: they were the willing instruments of Stalin's will. Bierut controlled the party machine as its First Secretary (a post he assumed after jailing Gomulka). Berman supervised the Security Police, foreign affairs, and culture (literature, press, and radio). Minc implemented the economic plans Moscow imposed on its largest European satellite. Bierut died in Moscow during the 20th Soviet Party Congress, in March 1956. Berman and Minc, both Jews, are still alive, but have been removed from their public offices and now live half in hiding, hated and despised. Moscow decided, apparently, to sacrifice these two for the sake of saving whatever might still be saved in Poland.

In April 1956, Khrushchev came to Warsaw for Bierut's funeral, after which he attended the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party, at which (as we have seen from the minutes of the Eighth Plenary Meeting) he tried to save the crumbling authority of the Moscow faction by inciting the Polish Communists to a campaign that would unload upon the Jews the responsibility for the terror and want brought to postwar Poland by her Communist regime. It is most unlikely that the other Kremlin bosses were unaware of what Khrushchev was doing.

Those Polish Communists who responded to his incitement well knew that in the following months much fuel would be poured on the fire they were lighting. The sad truth is that the Tenth Department of the Polish Security Police included many Jews (Swiatlo, Fejgin, Romkowski, and others), and that this department, together with the head of the interrogation section, Rozanski, was responsible for the unspeakable suffering of thousands of men and women whose only crime was that they had been considered unreliable by the ruling clique.

Rozanski, Fejgin, and the rest had been appointed to their jobs in 1944 or 1945 by Russian "advisers," and assigned to Poland by the Soviet NKVD. These creatures, some of whom were psychopathic personalities, were evidently chosen by their Russian masters because they were thought to be immune to Polish nationalism. Most of their victims were non-Communist Polish patriots. But in 1948, when Moscow turned against Tito, the Tenth Department launched a reign of terror inside the Polish Communist movement itself. It was then that Gomulka, Spychalski, and some other Polish "National Communists" were thrown into prison. They survived, to return to power triumphantly, but many others—nobody will ever know how many—Communists and non-Communists, and not a few Jews among them, disappeared forever in the "private prisons" of the Tenth Department.

Except for Swiatlo, who escaped in time, the officials of the Tenth Department are now in prison awaiting trial. At the Eighth Plenary Meeting, members of the Moscow faction complained one after the other that Gomulka (though they did not mention his name) was protecting "some people" from trial and punishment, as well as shielding those already arrested. Two names were repeatedly mentioned in this connection: Zambrowski and Berman. When Mijal, the most arrogant member of the faction, spoke about "cats who always land on their feet," he was clearly aiming at Zambrowski among others.

The first Jewish friend I met when I arrived in Warsaw on December 1, 1956, was as representative of the state of mind of the Jewish population in Poland as all the many other Jews I saw and talked with during my three weeks' stay. His mood was one of utter despair and panic.

Not many Polish Jews had survived the war. Of the three and a half millions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

living in pre-war Poland, some three million perished, most of them at the hands of the Nazis, but some others in Russian forced-labor camps or "places of exile." As soon as the war ended most of the surviving Jews fled Poland. Nobody knows the exact number that remained. It may be fifty thousand, but it may, on the other hand, be as high as ninety thousand, if all the Jews who changed their names during and after the war, and who deliberately severed their former religious and communal ties, are included.

Some of the Jews who stayed in Poland were Communists or Communist sympathizers who had decided to throw in their lot with the new regime. Many were middle-class people of some education who, though originally not Communists, were able to rise quickly, in the absence of other qualified personnel, to high party and government posts. For these, the recent upheaval in Poland has become a personal catastrophe. Their adherence to the pre-Gomulka regime now lays them open not only to attack as Stalinists, but to being used as scapegoats by the very same people they once served body and soul. Not only are they isolated inside the Communist party, they have become second-class citizens in Poland at large, held up to shame by their former bosses and allies as "cosmopolitans" without national or ideological principles.

Then there are the Jews who served in the security organs, in the "political departments" of the armed forces, and in the party machine. The new Gomulka regime is determined to cut these organizations to the bone. I was told that only 10 per cent of all those employed in any of these organizations are being allowed to keep their jobs. What fate awaits those dismissed?

One of the lies that Gomulka's new regime is killing is that unemployment does not exist in Communist Poland. There is actually a great deal of it. And even if there were not, the present mood of the country makes it unlikely that any former party worker or *aparatchik* will find anything but a hostile reception in most places of employment. According to a reliable source, Jacob Berman has had to leave the Historical Institute of the Polish Labor Movement, where he had been given a job after being fired from his political posts, because people there, all of them no doubt loyal Communists, absolutely refused to accept him as a co-worker. Workers in an ordinary factory may react even more violently when they find a former *aparatchik* or secret policeman next to them at the bench.

Still a third group of Jews now see all their hopes ruined. These are the completely Polonized Jews, for the most part members of the middle class, who have acquired Polish-sounding names and even hide their origin from their own children. The recent agreement between the government and the Roman Catholic Church on the introduction of religious teaching into the public schools makes attendance at such teaching formally dependent on the free decision of the parents. In actual fact, it means that 99 per cent of the school children will attend Catholic religious classes. Children of Jewish parents will either have to be baptized or be "exposed" for what they are. In the prevailing atmosphere, this would represent a tremendous psychological shock for many of these children. Most of their parents would rather leave the country than have their children suddenly discover how different they are from others. If they cannot make sure that their children will be Poles in Poland, they prefer to have them grow up as Jews in Israel. Many of these prospective emigrants would prefer to go to the United States or some other Western country, but the possibility of visas to any place other than Israel is practically non-existent for Polish Jews.

But the Jews in Poland are by no means all more or less assimilated doctors, lawyers, journalists, and civil servants. In its issue of January 13, *Po Prostu* published a survey of the Jewish population of Walbrzych in Lower Silesia, which has one of the largest Jewish communities in present-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

day Poland. According to this survey, 800 Jews were employed in cooperatives, producing clothes, shoes, and so forth; 150 worked in coal mines and heavy industry; there were seven engineers with university diplomas; 25 were higher technicians; 30 were doctors, and 20 were described as "economists." It is likely that a survey of the Jewish community of Warsaw or Cracow would show a higher proportion of middle-class people as against manual workers. I met many Jews in Warsaw who were very high civil servants, or editors of important papers and magazines, or who worked in the state broadcasting station. But even in Warsaw the majority of Jews are workers. And the working-class Jews, too, are afraid.

Panic, the urge to emigrate, has seized all the Jews of Poland. While I was in Warsaw the Communist-controlled Jewish Social and Cultural Society held a two-day conference attended by delegates from all the surviving Jewish communities of Poland (Warsaw, Lodz, Cracow, Wroclaw, Walbrzych, Szczecin, Dzierzanow, Bielawy, and a few others). Till then, the Communists who control Jewish public life in Poland had branded all talk of emigration as treason. But at this conference they surrendered completely, and it was unanimously decided not only to accept emigration as an expression of the will of the majority of Polish Jews, but actively to assist it. Nor was this all. The community leaders were so overborne that they had to promise to give more truthful information than before, in the Yiddish daily press of Poland and in other publications, about Jewish life abroad.

From personal observation, and from talks with some of these Communist community leaders, I got the impression that at heart they were still the same as when they had publicly joined in the scurrilous campaign in 1953 against the Moscow Jewish doctors who were falsely accused of trying to poison Soviet leaders on orders from American Jewish "plutocrats." Yet such was the feeling of the delegates to this conference that these leaders had had to assent to a solution whereby the Jews of Poland would leave their homes in a Communist country for an uncertain future in the "capitalist" world.

The mood of despair prevailing among non-assimilated Jews in Poland is, of course, caused to a great extent by the uncertain position of the new regime, exposed as it is to attacks both from without and from within. But these Jews also fear a more immediate danger.

The collapse of the former terrorist regime has brought in its wake a great weakening of all state authority, including that of the militia, which is the ordinary police of Poland. While I was in Poland crowds attacked and wrecked the Soviet consulate in Szczecin while the militia stood by without interfering. Back in June, during the uprising in Poznan, the militia-police was already in an advanced state of disintegration; by now it is a demoralized body of frightened men who run home to hide as soon as trouble brews in the streets.

In December a Jew was killed in Wroclaw by drunken soldiers. In Szczecin a store was wrecked because of a Jew who was working in it. In Walbrzych some houses where Jews lived were covered one night with anti-Semitic slogans. At the Jewish conference mentioned above, some speakers complained of having been dismissed from their jobs on the charge of being "Stalinists," but in reality because they were Jewish. In articles by Gentiles in the Polish press, many examples have been given showing that reductions in staff were resulting in a disproportionately high number of dismissals of Jewish employees.

The last remnants of what was once a great Jewry are leaving Poland. Last December twenty thousand Jews registered for visas with the Israeli consulate in Warsaw. The Polish government not only does not hinder them, but has publicly declared its readiness to help them emigrate. Thus a great, and in the end a sad, chapter of Jewish history is rapidly nearing its close. In two or three years Poland will be a country practically without Jews.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two thousand young people gathered in December, in Warsaw's largest hall, to dissolve the old totalitarian Union of Polish Youth and proclaim the real ideas of the progressive and radical young Poles. Some were university students, others workers and peasants. Some wore the uniforms of officers and non-coms in the army and air force. They came from every corner of the country, elected by tens of thousands of other young Poles. They unanimously chose as their chairman, and as reporter of their steering committee, a young Jewish intellectual named Roman Zimand. There were very few Jews in the hall, but they took more than their share in the debates heard at this remarkable gathering.

Poland's university students, as always in this part of the world, play an immense role not only as natural leaders of the country's youth, but also as the militant vanguard of the whole nation. But whereas before the war the Polish universities were citadels of anti-Semitism, today their students, together with their professors, have taken the lead in a determined fight against anti-Semitism. They now see in it—and they say so in the press, over the radio, and at public meetings—a traitorous movement aiming to rob the Poles of their newly won, even if restricted, freedom. They also see in it a challenge to all their beliefs in the dignity of man, which the tragic experiences of the last two decades have taught them to value more highly than at any time before.

These young people will fight anyone who threatens their freedom, no matter what the odds against them. But the remnants of Polish Jewry are too tired to fight. Who can blame them? May they find peace in some other corner of the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PROGRAM FOR A EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

The West Must Explain Itself to Soviet Youth

HUGH SETON-WATSON

FOUR months after the October days in Poland and the Hungarian revolution, the political outlook remains confused in Eastern Europe, and indeed for Europe as a whole.

In Poland the Gomulka regime does not seem to be in immediate danger. The January 20 election to the Sejm was to have allowed a certain freedom of choice to the voters, as in each constituency the number of candidates was larger than the number of seats. But at the last moment Gomulka appealed to the voters to renounce this freedom and to choose only the first names on each list, the official candidates of the Communist-led National Front. The appeal was successful, and the election was a plebiscite for Gomulka. It seems probable that this reversal of attitude by the government was caused by fear that if many non-official candidates were elected, the Soviet government might choose to regard this as proof of "counter-revolution," and treat Poland as it had treated Hungary. But in any case the new Sejm, though composed of persons approved by the government, is certainly something quite different from its predecessor and includes persons of very varied views. It is quite likely that the People's (peasant) and Democratic parties, hitherto helpless satellites of the Communists, will be able to exert some real influence. A number of independent Catholic intellectuals have been elected on the government list. Above all, the United Workers (Communist) party itself is changing into something new. If he is to resist the overt and covert Stalinists within the party, Gomulka cannot do without the support of the former Social Democrats. Nor can he ignore the pressure from the workers, who are now demanding genuine industrial self-government. Gomulka's declared policies amount to a reversal of the dogmatic priority for heavy industry, the forced collectivization of agriculture, and exploitation of the peasants that marked the Bierut era.

If Poland can surmount her economic difficulties, and if the Soviet government does not intervene, there is real hope of evolution towards something which could be described without hypocrisy as democratic socialism. The prospects are more hopeful than they ever were in Yugoslavia after 1949. One reason is that Poland is a more industrial country than Yugoslavia, and the Poles a more educated and skilled nation than the Serbs or Croats. Another is that, whereas in Yugoslavia the pressure for change after 1949 came only from external factors, in Poland it comes from within Polish society, from the workers and the intellectuals themselves. Yet false optimism would be mistaken. The economic crisis can hardly be overcome without massive Western aid, and if economic conditions deteriorate there may well be mass discontent and disorders which would give an excuse for Soviet intervention. Moreover, it is quite possible that even if there are not disorders the Soviet government may decide on aggression, with or without an "invitation"

HUGH SETON-WATSON is professor of Russian history at the University of London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Educated at Winchester and Oxford, he served as a member of the British legation to Rumania and Yugoslavia in 1940-41. He is the author of several books. Among his previous contributions to COMMENTARY have been "The Colonial System of the USSR" (May 1953), "Can We Free Eastern Europe Now?" (November 1953), and "Eruption in East Europe" (December 1956).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from some well-groomed Polish Communist quislings. The economic danger could be averted by Western economic aid, on a Marshall Plan scale, the military danger by strong diplomatic warnings to Moscow in advance by the West. At present there is little sign of either. Yet if a crisis is allowed to develop into a Polish-Soviet war possibly spreading into East Germany and leading to an uprising there, the danger of world war would be very grave.

In Hungary the Kadar "government" seems no stronger than it was. There is no more organized resistance, either armed or by strikes. But production is well below normal, and the whole nation remains implacably if passively hostile. Kadar promises better economic conditions to both workers and peasants. But men whose brothers and children have been massacred, whose country after a week of freedom has been plunged again in slavery, do not joyfully respond to offers of more shirts or better potato prices from the murderers. The workers will not join Kadar's reorganized Communist party. The educated youth, the pride of ten years of Communist rule, led the movement against the regime in October and remain united in hatred of all that Kadar stands for. School children continue to demonstrate against the regime. Its only success has been to reconstitute a police force, and even this Kadar could only do by recruiting members of the AVH, who had subjected him, and many thousands more innocent than him, to unmentionable tortures. Already this police is collecting information about those who took part in the October revolution.

Kadar at first claimed that he was the heir to the revolution, and would punish only those who allegedly perverted it into a "counter-revolution." Now his henchmen are abandoning even this specious distinction. The only noticeable difference between the Kadar and Rakosi regimes is that Rakosi was at least a man who could command respect as well as hatred. Hungary is a potentially rich country, richer than Poland. Its people are as skilled, as intelligent, and as industrious as the Poles. If Moscow would remove the odious Kadar, restore Nagy and let him work out his economic policies and make Hungary neutral, it would be a good neighbor to the Soviet Union and become a flourishing country, with a just balance between industry and agriculture, an excellent export trade, and splendid contributions to make to science and literature. But this the frightened Soviet butchers will not do, and so the Hungarian people remain inert, the economy stagnates, all the spiritual and material resources of this nation are wasted. Nobody gains, not even Moscow.

THE Yugoslav leaders tried for some weeks to justify the Kadar regime. Their embassy in Budapest persuaded Nagy and other revolutionary leaders to leave its premises, on the grounds of a promise of their safety from Kadar which it is hard to believe that so astute a man as Tito can have taken seriously. When the promise was violated by the Soviet masters of Budapest, they made mild protests. But even moderate criticisms by Tito and Kardelj of Soviet policy provoked fierce attacks in the Soviet press, and condemnation of the very principle of "national Communism." Soviet-Yugoslav relations are now about as bad as they were before Stalin died. If Tito ever hoped that the Soviet leaders would agree to a condominium with himself in Rumania and Bulgaria, he can hardly do so now. Both these countries remain firmly attached to Moscow, and no breath of criticism is allowed. Czechoslovakia and East Germany, under Siroky and Ulbricht, never deviated from Stalinism, even after the Twentieth Congress.

In the West, the Communist parties have suffered serious but not fatal shocks. The massacre of the Budapest workers was too much for some of their intellectuals. One or two British academics are tottering on the edge of a break with the party. In Italy Eugenio Reale has been expelled. But the cadres of the French and Italian parties remain firm. Both parties, after all, are essentially extensions of the Soviet bureaucracy operating on foreign soil. The cadres do not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

really live in France or Italy, but in a closed extra-territorial world of their own. Their material and spiritual existence is inseparable from the party. Intellectual aspirations and moral doubts do not assail them. They will keep the machine going, and the machine can still mobilize the masses. The bulk of the French working class, more loyally totalitarian than any in the world, will follow them. In Italy it seems that even before October they had lost some ground among the skilled working class of the North, and that Italian workers felt deeply about Hungary—which the French workers did not. Perhaps the common memories of 1848 had something to do with it. The attitude of Nenni, who is both an intellectual and a workers' leader, was also very important. But among the real "proletariat" of Italy, the submerged half of the nation, the workers of Rome and Naples and Palermo and the landless laborers and small peasants of the South, the Communists have not lost ground. Western Communism, as a weapon of Soviet policy, remains much what it was. It is too weak to make a revolution, but so it has been since 1945. Its nuisance value, as a pressure group on foreign policy, a source of industrial unrest, and a recruiting ground for Soviet spies, has been only slightly diminished.

THE most interesting developments of these months have been in Soviet Russia itself. The three social groups which made the Hungarian revolution, the students, the workers, and the army, have shown signs of unrest in Russia too. There have been large student meetings at Moscow and Leningrad universities at which criticism not only of students' living conditions but of general policy was uttered. Student audiences have refused to accept the official version of events in Hungary. Khrushchev himself found it necessary to threaten them, and the Soviet press has been devoting some attention to "demagogy" in the universities. This crime has also been rife among the workers. The trade union newspaper *Trud* has denounced it. When, at a meeting in the Kaganovich ball-bearings factory in Moscow, the city's party boss, Mrs. Furtseva, a candidate member of the Presidium, harangued the workers, who had recently gone on strike in protest against an increase in their labor "norms," about the necessity of discipline, there were cries of "How much do *you* earn?"

Whether the unrest among Soviet factory workers is due only to economic causes, or was affected by news of events in Hungary, is not clear. In the army, however, there is no doubt that the Hungarian revolution has had its effects. Every Soviet school child is brought up on romantic Marxist legends about heroic workers fighting on the barricades against soldiers sent to shoot them at the orders of capitalists and tyrants. In Budapest several thousand Soviet soldiers saw all this come true. The workers fought in the streets and the factories, but the Soviet soldiers themselves were cast not as heroes but as agents of the oppressors. Of their true role, and of the true nature of the people they were ordered to crush, they had no doubt. This is clear not only from the cases of desertion (which have been exaggerated in the Western press, but were considerable), but also from the many conversations between Soviet soldiers and Russian-speaking Hungarians after the fighting had stopped. In the 1940's Soviet soldiers returning from the West were subjected to long quarantine, under supervision of the security police, before they were allowed to return to their homes. Since 1953 the police has lost much of its power over the Soviet soldier and the Soviet citizen. To restore this power now would be very difficult. Even if Marshal Zhukov is worried about the morale of his troops, he will hardly agree to strengthening the hand of the police, thus undoing the army's one solid gain since Beria's fall. It is thus most unlikely that the government can now prevent the true story of the Hungarian revolution spreading from returning soldiers to the civilian population of the Soviet Union.

These are of course only beginnings. But they are things that would have been in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conceivable in Stalin's lifetime. The change is not in conditions in the Soviet Union so much as in men's minds. People now dare to express themselves. It is the difference between the political atmosphere under Alexander III and Nicholas II. In the 1880's people hated the autocracy, but they respected it as immensely powerful and ruthless: in the late 1890's they lost their respect, and began to talk about a coming revolution. It took its time, but come it did. In the mid-20th century the pace of history is quicker. The Hungarian revolution showed that intellectuals, workers, and army can destroy a totalitarian regime, provided that there is no foreign intervention. There would be no foreign intervention in favor of the regime if there were a revolution in the Soviet Union. If Poland develops freely, it may show that a socialist democracy is possible, with workers' self-government, intellectual freedom, and fair treatment of the peasantry. Such a demonstration would have effects no less explosive than those of Budapest. Improvements in the standard of living of the Soviet people will not arrest the process. On the contrary, it is when people emerge from the most crushing poverty that they begin to indulge in political thoughts.

Western observers should not be afraid of the thought of a Russian revolution. The failure of the naive hopes that were held in Britain and France in 1939 that there would be a revolution in Germany if Hitler went to war, made many Westerners believe that there could never be revolution against a totalitarian regime. But the Hungarians have shown that there can. Hitler's regime in 1939 had all the advantages of novelty and success. Many, perhaps most, Germans believed that Hitler's internal policies had been good for Germany, and there could be no doubt that his foreign policy had been extremely successful. Moreover, in time of war normal patriotism always operates at first in favor of one's government.

There was no reason why there should have been a revolution in Germany in 1939. But the Soviet regime today has none of the charms of novelty. It is very old and very stale. Its leaders have given their subjects just enough freedom in the last three years to create a strong appetite for more, and now they appear to be going back even on these concessions. There is no war, and it is most unlikely that the propaganda myth of hostile encirclement really convinces many people. I am not suggesting that a Russian revolution is imminent. I do not believe it is. But the strains and pressures on the Soviet regime have been increased by the events of October, and the widespread combination of apathy and discontent among the Soviet people is a dangerous foundation for the regime. For some time there have been pressures for reform in Soviet society, especially from the upper social stratum, the "toiling intelligentsia" as it is called by Soviet spokesmen, or the "state bourgeoisie," as I prefer to describe it. To the pressure for reform can now be added the beginnings of pressure for revolution. The two will develop side by side. The development of revolutionary pressure depends chiefly on the extent of contact between the intellectual youth and the elite of the working class in the great industrial centers, and on the extent to which the true facts about Hungary and Poland become known to the Soviet public.

WESTERN policy towards the Soviet Union in Europe has long been almost completely inert. This is true not only of the West European countries, Britain included, but also of the United States, for all the eloquent phrases of the President and Mr. Dulles since 1952. At present, as a result of the similar past passivity of American policy in the Middle East and of the Anglo-French fiasco at Port Said, all attention is being concentrated on the Arab world. These problems indeed require urgent and thoughtful attention, but the West will neglect Europe and Russia at its peril. The Middle East's oil is needed for Europe's economic prosperity, but the security of Europe is a matter of life and death to all Western nations.

Perhaps the most urgent single question

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the West is to decide what economic and other measures can be taken to prevent a situation arising in Poland which might bring a Soviet intervention there, with the danger of world war. Apart from this are two much wider questions. The first is, is there any general settlement of European security that the West could offer the Soviet Union with any hope of success? The second is, can the West do anything to help or accelerate the pressures for reform or revolution within the Soviet Union?

A European settlement must involve the reunification of Germany, Soviet evacuation of Eastern Europe, and at least some withdrawal of Western troops from Germany. There is a good deal of talk at present about these things, but most of it is so confused as to obscure the real problems. On the one hand, some British and continental socialists talk as if it were certain that the Soviet government would agree to a settlement if only the West would agree to a neutralization of Germany. On the other hand, some American and British commentators angrily brush away any talk of a settlement on the ground that NATO cannot be abandoned. But the question is rather more complicated.

It may be as well to begin by mentioning some kinds of settlement having no chance whatever of acceptance. One of these is that Germany should be unified under the regime of Ulbricht: in other words, that the Soviet empire be extended to the Rhine. This is certainly the aim of the Soviet leaders, but there is not the slightest chance that it would be accepted by the West, however camouflaged. Another is that all "foreign" troops be withdrawn from Germany and Eastern Europe, and all alliances be dissolved, to be replaced by a single European security pact. For the Soviet Union, this would be a good second best to the Sovietization of all Germany. It would mean that all American forces would return across the Atlantic, and that NATO would cease to exist, while the Soviet Union would have armies on the Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, and Rumanian borders which would re-enter those countries whenever the Soviet government chose. A single pact of which both the Western countries and the Soviet Union were members would be doomed to complete frustration and could protect nobody. This settlement is therefore unacceptable to the West. A third settlement would be that Germany should be reunited under the Bonn government and join NATO, and that all Soviet troops should be withdrawn from Eastern Europe unconditionally. This of course would be admirable from the Western point of view, but there is not the slightest chance that the Soviet Union would agree.

With these three hypotheses ruled out, one may consider briefly the five points of substance on which an agreement would have to be negotiated. These are the reunification of Germany, the German-Polish frontier, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, the relationship of a united Germany to other states, and European security.

Reunification of Germany can only mean the establishment of a single government for all Germany freely chosen by the German people. A free election would immediately lead to the disappearance of the Communist regime now existing in Eastern Germany, which is detested by the overwhelming majority of its subjects. Thus reunification of Germany can only mean the abolition of the "German Democratic Republic" (DDR), and the reduction to the dimensions of an insignificant sect of the "Socialist Unity party" (SED). Nothing else can be called reunification. For example, some loose association, or confederation, of the two existing German states would not be reunification: the power structure of the SED regime in the eastern third of the country would remain intact. Again, the formation of an "All-German" government on a basis of equal representation of the two existing German governments could not be a step towards reunification. This would merely be a repetition of the Kosice government of Czechoslovakia, formed early in 1945 with the consent of President Benes, which enabled the Czech and Slovak Com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munists to infiltrate key positions. Fortunately, there is no chance of such maneuvers being repeated now.

The Western nations, including the Germans, now know about Communist tricks. No amount of camouflage can conceal a "Kosice plan." No amount of verbiage can conceal the difference between a free election and a bogus election. The only admissible free election for Germany is one which allows exactly the same opportunities and freedom in all parts of the country to all parties and candidates—the same freedom to Social Democrats and Christian Democrats and Liberals in Leipzig as to Communists in Düsseldorf—and which leads to the formation of a government that will have the same authority in Cologne and Berlin and Dresden. This is something that cannot be concealed. International observers and international press correspondents, reporting without censorship, can make it quite clear. Either these conditions exist, or they do not. Either the Soviet government will consent to them, or it will not. If it does, it knows that its puppet regime will be swept ingloriously away. All past and present indications are that it will not consent. But until it does, there can be no reunification of Germany, and until Germany is reunified there can be no European security.

If it be nevertheless assumed that these conditions are fulfilled, and that a reunited independent Germany exists, she will then have to reach an agreement on her eastern frontier with Poland. This is primarily a matter for direct negotiations between free Germans and free Poles. The present frontier is not sacrosanct, and there might be some territorial changes, for example between the two Neisse rivers. But I have no doubt that substantially Poland will keep the lands she has gained. They are essential to her industrial development. They are being rapidly filled by the operation of the highest rate of natural population increase in Europe. Their loss is the price Germany must pay for the crimes of Hitler against Poland and against the world.

Germany suffered in the war, as did all belligerent countries. Since the war she has made a remarkable economic recovery, thanks to help from the United States and Britain as well as to the efforts of her own people. If the other European powers are now to make further sacrifices of their own interests to help the Germans to obtain unity, it is reasonable to expect the Germans too to make sacrifices. If Germany accepts substantially the loss of her eastern provinces to Poland, no other European state will object—certainly not the Soviet Union or France or Britain. Undoubtedly, there are strong minority pressure groups in Western Germany that are implacably—and, from a German point of view, quite understandably—opposed to such a sacrifice. But German governments, like other governments, must have the courage to stand up to minority pressure groups, rather than use them as an excuse for inaction in matters where the interests of their allies are involved. It should also not be forgotten that at present both Western Germany and Poland have one great common interest, the removal of the puppet East German state, which is an armed enemy base that threatens the existence of both countries. To the united Germany and the free Poland of the future, cooperation with each other is a greater interest than any mere territorial problem. It would, of course, be very foolish to be naively optimistic about Polish-German friendship. But if it is true that there can be no German unity without the abolition of the East German puppet, it is no less true that there can be no European settlement without Polish-German agreement.

The third condition for a European settlement is the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. This would undoubtedly be followed, at varying intervals, by changes in the regimes and policies of the East European countries, at first certainly towards national independence, and then probably towards political democracy. Independence would involve the right of each government to choose whether it wishes to remain allied to the Soviet Union or not.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What could the West offer the Soviet Union in return for this? Certainly *not* the abolition of NATO. As far as the countries of the Atlantic seaboard are concerned, the most that could be said would be that, as the East European states must be free to choose whether they will remain allied to the Soviet Union, so the Atlantic countries must be free to choose whether they will remain allied to each other and to the United States. But in fact these countries have already freely made this choice, and are of course free at some future date to change their minds if conditions radically change. But the West could offer the Soviet Union the assurance that it would not ask a united Germany to adhere to NATO. Another possibility would be that both a united Germany and the East European states should be specifically declared neutral, and should be entitled to their own armed forces, on a parity with other European states—in fact, that they should have a status similar to that of Sweden. The type of armaments that they should have might also be a subject for negotiation. This could, however, be decided only with the free consent of the German and East European governments. To impose on them some unilateral discriminatory disarmament would not be politically practicable.

This settlement—reunited Germany, Polish-German agreement, Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe, uncommitted status for Germany and for Eastern Europe—would have to be guaranteed by all the powers concerned. There would have to be a general European security pact which would commit all signatories to go to war with any state that violated the settlement. Re-entry of Soviet or Western troops into any state of the "uncommitted zone," whether at the "invitation" of some puppet regime or not, would constitute aggression. A European security pact of this sort would differ radically from the European security pact offered some time ago by Molotov. It would follow German reunification and Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe, and would not involve the abolition of NATO (except for the secession of Germany from NATO). The security pact would of course be signed by both the United States and the Soviet Union. This, of course, I fully realize, involves complicated questions concerning types of defense and types of deterrent on which I am in no way competent to express an opinion.

From a Western point of view, such a settlement is hindered by one great obstacle: German unwillingness to accept the Oder-Neisse line. If this were overcome, the settlement would still involve grave risks. One is that Germany might later join with the Soviet Union against the West, perhaps cementing the union by a sixth partition of Poland. This is a subject on which pages could be written. All that I can say is that after a great deal of thought I believe on balance that this risk is worth taking. A second is political subversion. The West would be prevented from aiding any government in the "uncommitted zone" threatened from within by a Communist or Stalinist rising. This need not, I suggest, unduly alarm the West. It is far more likely that there would be a rising against Communism in the evacuated East European countries—against which the security pact would preclude the Soviet Union from taking action—than a rising in favor of Communism or Stalinism in Germany or Austria or Yugoslavia—against which the West would be similarly precluded from action. A third danger, far the most grave, is that the security pact would be ineffective because the West European and American peoples, concerned only with the preservation of their own comfort, would prevent their governments from fulfilling their obligations, and that the Soviet leaders, knowing the weaknesses of the West, would risk aggression. This will of course depend partly on whether military experts can devise effective deterrents that fall short of the supreme horror of the hydrogen bomb. But it must be admitted frankly that against the danger of weak Western public opinion there is no sure guarantee. No government and no na-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion is stronger than its own courage and sense of honor allow it to be. No written pacts can solve this problem.

It seems to me that a settlement within the broad framework sketched above would, despite the very real risks and sacrifices, be in the interest of the Western nations. Indeed, I cannot see that any terms short of these can secure a European settlement, can give the people of Europe the peace they have not known since 1914, or free the people of America from at least a large part of their nightmare. (There would of course still remain a host of Asian and African nightmares.)

But is there any chance that the Soviet government would accept these terms? If it were primarily concerned with the security of Soviet territory, I do not see why it should not, for this is precisely what it would get. It would also be relieved of the burden of terrorizing 100,000,000 people in Eastern Europe who hate its rule. Unfortunately this is not the main concern of the Soviet leaders. Khrushchev, Molotov, Bulganin, and the rest of them are dogmatic obscurantists whose fixed immutable aim is to spread their form of government to the ends of the earth, and meanwhile not to allow it to disappear from any place in which it has once been set up. For this reason they will not allow the abolition of the East German regime, the first and inescapable condition for a settlement. There was a real chance that they might have entered into negotiations in October, and meanwhile allowed Hungary to maintain a precarious freedom, if the Suez crisis had not come when it did. Now there seems to be no chance.

Nevertheless, it is important that the West should work out and declare a program of action. One reason is that the West must give hope to the Germans and to the East Europeans. There is a temptation now to turn one's back on the Soviet bloc, to draw tighter the links between the West European nations, and to leave the rest to their fate. But this will not work. Western Germany is a loyal partner today in NATO, but it cannot be expected that the German people should write off 18,000,000 Germans. This will always be a fatal weakness of any exclusively West European bloc. No less important is the demoralizing effect that such a policy would have on 100,000,000 East Europeans, who today are among the most devoted friends of the West in the world—certainly much truer friends than the Indians and Arabs can ever be.

But there is another reason. For ten years we have become accustomed to the Soviet technique of appealing, over the heads of Western governments, to the people of the West and of the more or less dependent countries of Asia or Africa. Today at last it is possible to appeal, over the heads of the Soviet government, to the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. Two things in particular we must tell these peoples. One is that it is possible to overthrow a totalitarian regime: the full story of the Hungarian revolution must be told, with special emphasis on the points of similarity and difference with the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, which every Soviet child is taught at school. The second point is that the Western peoples have no hatred for the peoples of the Soviet Union, that they wish only to live in peace with them. In order to make this clear, it is necessary to explain to them in terms that they can understand what the aims of Western policy are, and what are the rights of other peoples—not only of Poles and Hungarians and Germans, but also of Ukrainians and Estonians and Georgians. Now at last we know that we have an audience in the Soviet Union—not the hard-faced men in their fifties and sixties who rose to power by the *Yezhovshchina* (Great Purge) twenty years ago, but the young generation which is excluded from influence and power, which does not feel itself responsible for the past, which is tired of stale rhetoric, and aspires to something very simple the mention of which induces in many sophisticated Western intellectuals an embarrassed snigger, but which is taken seriously in 20th-century

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia, as it was in 17th-century England—freedom.

No doubt Western broadcasting services in Russian are doing good work. No doubt also, Soviet jamming creates great difficulty. But far more can and should be done, far more money spent, far more thought given, far more be jointly planned among the American, European, and British authorities concerned. This is no sideshow, no intellectual luxury, but a vital weapon in the political war in which, whether we know it or not, we have been engaged ever since the war against Hitler ended.

Western broadcasts, and any other contacts between Western and Soviet people, including individual and collective visits in both directions, can have only a marginal effect on developments inside the Soviet Union. The pressures for reform and for revolution can be but slightly accelerated or retarded by wise or foolish Western talk or action. But the West can and must explain itself to the young generation in the Soviet Union. If we do not do this, we shall find that when at last the great changes do come, and new people and forces rise to the top, they will be no more able to understand and to make peace with us than Khrushchev and Zhukov.

THE LOST CHILDREN

JACOB SLOAN

THEY have become no legend. Fifteen
winters after, no one any more
dreams of their pigeoning home-
ward in the same light cottons
they were driven out in, wings,
pushing hands, through the dumptruck bars.

But the Lost Tribes are no comparison.
What stones could time have possibly
thrown across the river Sambation
of our wide unrest, to defend
them from the alien host?
What Messiah raised up
to head their gay infant crusade
for our redemption?

Part of no fate, nothing at all to do
with our vacated faith, they have slid
down the drains of our memory
unclogged by myth. And this our
judgment, ever weighing relatives,
gravely nods yes: Screen
the polluting bodies of their screams
out. Nothing echoes in the sewer now.

JACOB SLOAN is a frequent contributor of poetry to our pages. He is on the staff of the American Jewish Committee.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LUBOVITCHER MOVEMENT: I

Organized Mysticism

HERBERT WEINER

IN KOREA one day, an American soldier wandered off from his squad looking for a stream in which to wash his hands before opening his can of C-Rations. A shell struck the squad's position, killing every one of his comrades. Today the young veteran vows he owes his life, thus miraculously preserved, to a visit he had made, just before shipping out to Korea, to 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. There he had been counselled to observe, even while in combat, as much as he could of the Jewish law, including the commandment to wash the hands before eating. It was from the "Rebbe" of the Lubovitcher movement that the young man had received this counsel.

The story is one of hundreds told about the Rebbe's uncanny wisdom. True, some of the Rebbe's neighbors who glimpse the visitors going in and out of 770 Eastern Parkway at all hours of the day and night seem skeptical of the reputed miracles. People recall, with a touch of malice, how the building itself, with its huge entrance door, its red-tiled hall, and its mahogany-paneled rooms where the Rebbe confers blessings and advice, was formerly owned by a doctor about whose practice there had been some lifted eyebrows. The neighborhood as a whole is vaguely aware that the structure now houses some kind of Jewish religious group. But there cannot be many passers-by who know what is really going on; that here, in this rather neglected three-story building, is the headquarters of a unique spiritual realm whose authority extends into many lands, and whose ruling head exercises an almost absolute control over the lives of tens of thousands of followers. Menachem Mendel Shneurson is the name of the present Lubovitcher Rebbe* and he is a direct descendant in the seventh generation of Shneur Zalman, the original founder of this Hasidic dynasty. He is also the son-in-law of the previous Rebbe. Yet he is only a constitutional monarch after all, for ruler and ruled are bound by the oral and written traditions of Orthodox Judaism.

The Rebbe and his followers, the Hasidim, do not like their movement talked about as if it were only a matter of miracle tales and miraculous exploits. The plain facts of the history of the movement, they point out, are more wonderful than all the stories about the powers of all the Lubovitcher Rebbes. Founded about two hundred years ago in Northern Russia, the movement has since been active in many other countries and is today in some ways stronger and more influential than when it first began. Though mysticism lies at its core, the Lubovitcher movement has been blessed with a flair for organization and public relations that has enabled it to strike firm roots in environments as diverse as Communist Russia, North Africa, and the United States. Today as in the past, thousands of Lubovitcher followers continue to accept the Rebbe's word as authoritative,

HERBERT WEINER is rabbi of Temple Israel in South Orange, New Jersey. He was born in Boston in 1919, and educated at the University of Massachusetts, the Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is author of *A Sabbath Handbook* (1951). Rabbi Weiner's last previous contribution to these pages was "The Liberal Religious Impulse in Israel" (July and August 1955).

*Among Hasidim, the title "Rebbe" signifies "Leader." The Rebbe is sometimes called "Tsaddik," or "Righteous." He may or may not be an ordained rabbi, although all the Lubovitcher Rebbes have also been rabbis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not only in questions of ritual, but in matters of health, livelihood, and, if it comes to it, life itself.

NOBODY paid me any attention when I walked into the office at 770 Eastern Parkway. Several people were typing, others were chatting or using the telephone, and a stout man whose *yarmelke* somehow managed to cling to the side of his bald head was entering figures in a large ledger. All the men wore *yarmelkes* or hats, and the one girl working in the office had on a plain long-sleeved dress. The steel filing cabinet, the telephones studded with inter-office buttons, the quiet activity, all created an atmosphere of business-like efficiency—hardly what I had expected to find at the headquarters of a sect of mystics.

I decided to approach a man whose smart silk tie and trimmed blond mustache set him off from the other, more indifferently dressed people in the room. I introduced myself and announced my purpose of writing about the Lubovitcher movement. He told me that he was Dr. Nissan Mindel, in charge of the English-language publications of the organization. He offered me several pamphlets describing the history of the movement and something of its philosophy, but I explained that this was not primarily what I wanted. My main interest was in what Hasidim call the *p'nimiut*—the inner essence—of the movement, the source of its spiritual power, and the relation between the individual Hasid and his leader, the Rebbe. Dr. Mindel smiled and pointed out that such matters were not easy for an outsider to understand. There was no time for details, for Dr. Mindel was eager to start driving home to Long Island before the evening's traffic rush began. I asked him where I could find a Rabbi Weingarten; he, I had been told, would be a good man to see.

"Rabbi Weingarten, of course—the 'globe-trotter' we call him," Dr. Mindel grinned. "I think he's home now between trips, and you can call him for an appointment."

As for an appointment with the Rebbe himself, Dr. Mindel told me to see Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's personal secretary, a thin, fair man who at the moment was using one of the several phones on his desk at the other side of the office. "Incidentally," Dr. Mindel informed me as he prepared to leave, "Rabbi Hodakov was a member of the Latvian government before our Rebbe's predecessor made him his secretary."

When Rabbi Hodakov had finished his phone conversation and disposed of two bearded young men who had been waiting to speak to him, I walked over to his desk. He extended a limp hand and asked if I spoke Yiddish. There was a quizzical but good-natured expression in his light blue eyes as I indicated my purpose in seeking an audience with the Rebbe. Rabbi Hodakov turned the pages of a little black book and murmured that the Rebbe's calendar was filled for the next six months but he would see what he could do for me. The Rebbe received people only three times a week, beginning at eight o'clock in the evening. I asked how long these evening sessions lasted. "Oh, sometimes till three, sometimes till five o'clock in the morning," he smiled. His smile, charming and rather bashful, showed a trace of pride when he mentioned the Rebbe. I asked if the Rebbe slept during the day after these meetings. Rabbi Hodakov raised his brows. "During the day the Rebbe is busy directing the activities of the Lubovitcher movement in every part of the world."

"When does he sleep?" The answer to this question was another slightly mysterious smile and a shrug. Then he made a note in his black book and told me that I could see the Rebbe four weeks hence at ten o'clock in the evening.

"You must get a lot of nudniks," I said to him self-consciously as I rose to leave. "How do you screen them?"

"Everybody is an *olam koton*—a microcosm," Rabbi Hodakov replied. "Anybody can see the Rebbe, but, of course, there have to be priorities, and"—the bashful smile appeared again—"sometimes people have to wait a long time."

"Incidentally," I asked, "how many fol-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lowers of the Lubovitcher movement are there in the world?"

"How many Jews are there in the world?" answered Rabbi Hodakov good-naturedly.

Later I learned that Rabbi Hodakov's reply to my question had not been altogether facetious. Lubovitcher Hasidim regard the Rebbe not only as their own leader but also as the spiritual "shepherd" of all Israel in his generation. "He is to us," one of his closest disciples explained to me, "what Moses was to Israel in his time. Not that the Rebbe is to be compared to Moses, 'like whom there has been none other since.' But the Rebbe is like a little Moses, like a 'picture whose size has been reduced.'" That is the difference, my informant went on to say, between the Lubovitcher Hasidim and other Hasidic sects. The other Rebbes are interested mainly in their own Hasidim, while the Lubovitcher Rebbe considers himself responsible for the spiritual and bodily welfare of every Jew, no matter where he lives or what he believes.

THE following week I called Rabbi Weingarten on the phone and asked for an appointment. The genial personality of "the globe-trotter," as Dr. Mindel had called him, came through even on the phone; he seemed hardly able to delay his exposition of Hasidism until we met. A chance remark I made about hearing a baby crying in his house brought forth a Hasidic *vertel,* one of those aphorisms spoken in the name of the Rebbe. "Yes, when a baby cries he has to be answered, and sometimes," Rabbi Weingarten added significantly, "a seventy-year-old man cries like a baby."

Rabbi Weingarten's home was not far from the Rebbe's office, and when I arrived I found myself confronting a surprisingly young man. Despite his long brown beard, he did not seem much more than thirty years old. My visit had been arranged for the early evening, and all his children were asleep except for a five-year-old whose head (covered by a *yarmelke*) kept popping out of the window above while his father and I conversed on the small porch below. "*Gei shlofen, yingele*—Go to bed, little boy—" Rabbi Weingarten called out to him, and the little head darted in, only to reappear a few seconds later. Rabbi Weingarten's English was touched by the slightest of accents, and I asked him if he always used Yiddish with his childern. He told me that Yiddish was still the basic language of communication in the Lubovitcher movement, though his children spoke English. The Rebbe delivered his discourses in Yiddish, although, Rabbi Weingarten hastened to inform me, he was fluent in a great many languages. "He studied science, you know, at the Sorbonne, before being chosen Rebbe."

I hadn't known this, and Rabbi Weingarten seemed gratified by my surprise. Here I had an opportunity to turn to the subject I was most curious about—the Rebbe's reputed powers. Rabbi Weingarten quickly began to supply me with stories about people who had been helped by the Rebbe. A girl from Brazil, for example, had been advised by her doctors to undergo a serious brain operation, but the Rebbe had disagreed. "They make their living by cutting; I make my living by not cutting," the Rebbe likes to say. His opinion had finally been upheld by a brain specialist, and the child was now well.

How could the powers of the Rebbe be explained? Rabbi Weingarten admitted it would be hard for one like myself who had not seen the evidence with his own eyes to believe, but he tried to explain it to me nevertheless. The Rebbe had unusual powers because he was a holy man—that is, every limb of his body was sanctified by pure living and by the total observance of God's commandments. This was not an idea peculiar to Hasidism—even Maimonides, the philosopher and rationalist, had asserted that the spirit of prophecy might descend upon anyone who had completely purified his heart and tongue and limbs. In addition to this, however, the Rebbe, being a direct descendant of the "*Alter Rebbe,*" Shneur Zalman, the founder of the Lubovitcher movement, had inherited the accrued merit of his ancestry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lubovitch, Rabbi Weingarten told me, was a branch—in his opinion, the main branch—of the Hasidic movement that was inaugurated in the Ukraine early in the 17th century by the Baal Shem Tov—the "Master of the Good Name." There have been many attempts to define the nature of Hasidism. Some have described it as a revolt of the Jewish masses against the over-legalistic and "dry" Judaism of the 17th and 18th centuries, others as a mystical, life-affirming reaction to circumstances which were not only crushing the Jews bodily but also filling their souls with *more shkhoire*—black despair. Against this *more shkhoire* the Baal Shem declared war, for, he said, despair was Satan's device for destroying life. A Jew must understand that joy and goodness were at the heart of the universe; what appeared to be evil was but the external garment which the goodness of God sometimes had to assume. "We are not allowed," the Baal Shem is reported to have declared, "to say that anything is 'bad,' but we may say that it is bitter, for sometimes the doctor has to use bitter as well as sweet herbs in his effort to help us."

In addition to teaching the illusoriness of evil, Hasidism gives the individual a sense of importance. "When the commander issues a command," said Joseph Isaac, the predecessor of the present Lubovitcher Rebbe, "then the commanded feels himself noticed and important." Of course, every Orthodox Jew feels himself to be personally commanded by and therefore important to his God. But the Hasid has the advantage of knowing that he is needed by his *Tsaddik*, his Rebbe. For though the Rebbe is as a "head" to the Hasid, the Hasidim are the Rebbe's "feet"—and they need each other. It is from the head that the feet receive direction, but it is from the feet that strength and power flow into the head.

The movement which had been initiated by the Baal Shem Tov flourished vigorously for more than a century, and then rituals once filled with vital mystic power began to lose their inner meaning and degenerate into superstitious forms. Hasidim who had been inspired by great and original religious spirits now began clinging to empty vessels—to "Rebbes" who were leaders by virtue of their ancestry rather than their endowments. Lubovitch, however, seemed to be an exception, and its influence had spread with the years. I asked Rabbi Weingarten how Lubovitcher Hasidism had been able to escape the degeneration of spirit which has marked several other Hasidic sects.

"*Mesiras nefesh*," he replied quickly, "the willingness to sacrifice oneself. Our Rebbes set us an example of *mesiras nefesh*. They showed us that if something is very important, it can be done. After all, if something matters very much—as much as life itself—you find a way to do it."

Besides, Lubovitch believed that no Jew was ever wholly lost to God. The "*Alter Rebbe*," Shneur Zalman, had taught that within every Jew there was a "point" of authentic religious faith, an element of pure Jewishness, "*dos pintele Yid*." One had to remember that "the soul itself was so much deeper than what appeared to the eye," and that consequently the surface appearance of a Jew ought never to discourage one from attempting to tap his inner capacity for faith in and love for Judaism. It was the principle of "*dos pintele Yid*" that gave to the Lubovitcher movement its missionary spirit.

Before I left, Rabbi Weingarten told me that in two weeks' time there would be a "*farbrengung*," a festive gathering of Lubovitcher Hasidim, and if I wanted to see Lubovitch in action, I could do no better than be present. The *farbrengung* was the annual celebration of Rabbi Joseph Isaac's release from the Spalerno prison in Leningrad, where he had been held by the Communists. Hasidim would be coming from all parts of the world for the occasion, and I would have a chance to hear the Rebbe "give Torah."

I SPENT the next two weeks speaking to other Hasidim and reading about the Lubovitcher movement to prepare myself for the *farbrengung*. It soon became clear that no real understanding of the movement

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was possible without a fuller acquaintance with its history. Lubovitcher Hasidim are very conscious of the history of their movement and they are forever publishing collections of anecdotes out of the lives of previous Rebbes. "Noble" families who trace their genealogy back to favorites in the courts of previous Rebbes also keep full records. Even the songs sung by other generations of Hasidim have been carefully compiled and published.

The central name in all these chronicles is Shneurson—a name derived from the founder of the movement, Shneur Zalman of Ladi, a small town in White Russia. He is the *"Alter Rebbe"*—the Old Rabbi, sometimes called simply "The Rav," "The Rabbi," or "Tanya," after a collection of his essays and letters which is studied by every Hasid almost as reverently as the Bible itself.

Shneur Zalman (1747-1812) was born in a part of White Russia that was under the spiritual influence of the "Jerusalem" of its day, Vilna in Lithuania. It was in Vilna that the traditional rabbinic exaltation of Talmudic scholarship reached its apex and found its apotheosis in Elijah the Gaon (1720-1797)—the genius of Vilna. Being a contemporary of Elijah, the natural course of events for Shneur Zalman, whose brilliance as a Talmudist was recognized when he was still a boy, would have been to go to Vilna and study in one of the schools dominated by the spirit of the great master. Shneur Zalman was well suited for the Lithuanian Talmudic world. His mind inclined toward precise definition, and tended to be legalistic in its approach to Jewish law, on which he wrote several treatises. "But two directions lay open to me," he used to say, "Vilna or Mezritch." Shneur Zalman chose Mezritch in the Ukraine, where Dov Baer, the "Great Preacher," the immediate successor of the Baal Shem, held forth. It was there, under the influence of Dov Baer that Shneur Zalman became a Hasid.

Scholars have found it difficult to define the precise doctrinal differences which divided the Hasidim from their "opponents," the Misnagdim. All the elements of Hasidic teaching—the emphasis on joy, on the need for inner spirit as well as outer form, and on *d'vekut*, the mystical "clinging" to God—were also part of traditional rabbinic Judaism. Perhaps the difference was a matter of degree or emphasis. At any rate, all agree that with the advent of the Baal Shem and his followers, a renewal of vitality took place in a people who had begun to feel that Judaism was an arid burden. Shneur Zalman was one of thousands who were touched by this new *hitlahavut*—this flaming enthusiasm of spirit. But he insisted that the primal Hasidic enthusiasm could be preserved only if it were transmuted into clearly understandable theory and teaching. The feelings of the heart were important, but not to be relied upon. They had to be controlled and fixed by the powers of the mind.

Shneur Zalman's teachings were a conscious attempt to mediate between Mezritch and Vilna, between Hasidic enthusiasm and rabbinic "learning." The result was a clear and carefully organized system of thought called *Habad*, after the first letters of the Hebrew words for wisdom (*Hochmah*), understanding (*Binah*), and knowledge (*Da-at*). Ironically, however, it was the mediator himself who became the victim and symbol of a conflict which tore communities and families apart, and brought Hasidim and Misnagdim to the point of forbidding "intermarriage" with each other.

A FEW sentences from one of the various bans of excommunication hurled at the Hasidim by the Vilna Gaon gives an indication of the temper of the struggle that raged for generations, assuming its ugliest form during the life of Shneur Zalman: "Woe unto the evil renegades who have brought forth a new law and religion. . . . Let no one pity them. Be vengeful for the Lord," wrote the saintly scholar of Vilna in 1796. "Let sparks fly from your feet and flames from your mouth, and let the sword avenge. . . ."

The *"Alter Rebbe"* tried to visit the Gaon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to explain that Hasidism was not a "new religion," and that the Hasidic emphasis on the Talmudic teaching, "There is no place empty of Him," was neither pantheistic nor contrary to rabbinic theology. His efforts were of no avail: "When we arrived at the Gaon's house, twice he shut the door in our face."

The Hasidic leader tried to comfort his followers, assuring them that in time the hatred and bitterness against Hasidism would pass away.*

Not all his disciples were so meek-spirited, however, and on the day of the Gaon's death groups of Hasidim danced in the streets of a Vilna suburb. At the grave of the Gaon, his followers swore vengeance and they carried out their threat. Twice Shneur Zalman was denounced to the Russian government for heresy and subversion by Jewish "opponents," and both times he was sent to prison. But after his second release, in 1801, it was apparent even to the Misnagdim that the Hasidic movement was firmly established.

The most surprising aspect of Shneur Zalman's turbulent life was the time he found in it for constructive organizational work. Some claim that this organization rather than the Tanya's ideas accounts for the dynamic history of Lubovitch. Most of the other Hasidic sects survived for a generation or two on the memory of their founder's inspiration, and then decayed. But in line with his conviction that "inspiration" could only be preserved in the vessels of the mind—wisdom, understanding, and knowledge—Shneur Zalman set up an effective school system. He believed also, with the Baal Shem, that "a hole in the body makes an even greater hole in the soul," and concerned himself with economic and social projects in behalf of destitute Jews. He took a particular interest in the welfare of Jews who lived in out-of-the-way communities, and always sent his disciples to such areas to teach and guide.

*See "The Tanya and the Gaon" in COMMENTARY, January 1956.—ED.

THESE three fields of endeavor—educational, economic, and missionary—continued to be the main concerns of all the Lubovitcher Rebbes who succeeded the Tanya. When the sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph Isaac (1880-1949), came to America, he immediately began working along similar lines.

One of the pictures of Rabbi Joseph Isaac shows a man with a full beard streaked with gold and gray, sitting at a table and holding a pencil over a blank piece of paper. The most impressive part of Joseph Isaac's face are his stern, commanding eyes, which are in sharp contrast with his white, almost effeminate hands. It is a face that radiates what the Hasidim call *malchus*, the visage of royalty and command. Joseph Isaac's life seemed in some respects prefigured by the career of his ancestor, the *"Alter Rebbe."* Like his great forefather, the sixth Rebbe had to face charges brought against him by his fellow Jews. The now defunct "Yevsektsia," the Jewish section of the Russian Communist party, accused him of subverting the regime by propagating the Jewish religion in an underground network of religious schools throughout the Soviet Union.

He was arrested by the secret police and condemned to death, but again the first Rebbe's destiny seemed re-enacted in his life. Prominent foreign statesmen intervened on his behalf with the Soviet authorities and he was released from prison on his birthday, the 12th of Tammuz, 1927. He was able to leave Russia and settle first in Lithuania, then in Warsaw. He lived through the German bombardment of Warsaw, and again through high diplomatic influence escaped. In 1940 he arrived in New York, a sick and broken man. Nevertheless, in the remaining ten years of his life he was able to establish his movement firmly in the New World.

The talents of this European Rebbe who spoke little English seemed peculiarly well adapted for America. Perhaps his powerful will could have imposed itself on any environment, but there was something American in his flair for practical activities. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organized "Torah Missions" to spread religious literature among Jewish farmers who were amazed to find bearded young men knocking at their doors and professing an interest in their souls. Lubovitcher Yeshiva buses began rolling through the streets of cities and towns all over America, carrying Jewish boys and girls to newly founded all-day Hebrew schools. A publication society was established and religious textbooks, in English as well as Hebrew, began to make their appearance. Joseph Isaac proved again that "nothing can stand before the will," and the movement born in Lithuania spread to every part of the United States, South America, Israel, and Australia. Before his death, Joseph Isaac saw a new and promising field for Jewish proselytizing in North Africa, and today the Lubovitcher network of schools is capturing the hearts of Sephardic children in the *mellahs*.

I HAD been warned to come early to the *farbrengung* if I wanted a seat, but the wooden tables and benches set up in the courtyard adjoining the building were already filled when I arrived. At one end of the courtyard was a long table covered with a white cloth and mounted on a platform. Most of the seats on the dais were still empty. But a row of chairs behind the central table was already occupied by bearded dignitaries of the movement. A microphone had been set up at the center of the table and hooked to loudspeakers at the other end of the courtyard. I saw a few inches of space on one of the rear benches and, following the example of others, climbed from table to table over the backs of the seated people to reach it—the tables and benches had been packed so closely together that there was no aisle space left. It was a humid summer evening, and there were beads of sweat on the faces of many of the Hasidim, who wore full jackets or long black coats along with large-brimmed hats. But nobody seemed to mind the heat, and the crowded courtyard was only further proof to the Hasidim of the greatness of their Rebbe.

There was a loud hum of conversation as Hasidim who had not seen each other for many months exchanged greetings. Occasionally, a group of students, standing shoulder to shoulder on one of the benches, started a song, and most of the gathering joined in. I was told that the Rebbe would not appear for another hour, that is, not until about 9 P.M. I looked around the room for some of the people I had previously met. I could see the "globetrotter," Weingarten, standing on the edge of the dais next to Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's personal secretary. Each was wearing a black silken cord, called a *gartel*, around his waist, a reminder to the Hasid of the distinction between the "higher" and "lower" parts of man.

The person next to whom I was sitting was dressed in a neat business suit and conventional gray hat. He told me he was a Conservative rabbi in Brooklyn who had been raised in the Lubovitcher movement and "would never cut his ties to them." He tried to attend every "gathering" and, despite his own strayings from strict Orthodoxy, was an admirer of the Rebbe. I asked him how he felt about the powers which the Hasidim attributed to the Rebbe. "Listen," he answered, "I know only this—nobody is more concerned with the fate of Jews—every Jew—than the Rebbe, and that is what attracts me to him." He indicated a man with a black beard sitting near us. "He was raised in Russia in the Lubovitch 'underground.' If you ask him how he was able to maintain his religion at the risk of death, he will tell you it was the inspiration of the Rebbe."

My neighbor pointed out some of the important personages in the courtyard. Directly to the right of the Rebbe's chair was a red-bearded man, Rabbi Mintlik, who was head of the Eastern Parkway Yeshiva. Seated at one end of the table on the dais was Rabbi Gur Aryeh, the brother-in-law of the Rebbe. I tried to get a look at him, for we had already spoken on the phone and arranged an interview. Joseph Isaac had had no sons, but he did have two daughters, and Gur Aryeh had married one of them. But it was the other son-in-law, Menachem Men-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

del, who had been chosen as Rebbe after Joseph Isaac's death. I wondered on what grounds the choice had been made.

At about nine-thirty the yard suddenly became quiet. There was the sound of the scraping of chairs and benches as people tried to stand, and all eyes turned to the door which led from the courtyard into the main building. Into the yard with quick step walked the seventh Rebbe of the Lubovitcher movement, son-in-law of Joseph Isaac and a direct descendant on his father's side of the *"Alter Rebbe."*

Rabbi Menachem Mendel turned out to be a man of average height and build. The most striking feature of his well-formed face were his deep, gentle blue eyes in which there was little of the *malchus*—imperial sternness—of his predecessor. His complexion was pale, contrasting with his short black beard in which streaks of gray were beginning to appear. His frock coat, hat, and tie were all black and neatly tailored. The brim of the hat was just a bit larger than a conventional brim, but smaller than that of the Orthodox Hasid. I had heard that when Rabbi Menachem Mendel was studying in Paris, he had refused to wear the long black coat which was customary in Hasidic circles. Now he alludes jokingly to his former habit of dress as a device that gave him more hours for study—"Hasidim didn't come to me when I wore a short coat."

There must have been considerable discussion when the question of elevating Menachem Mendel to the spiritual throne of Lubovitch arose; Lubovitcher Rebbes had never approved of secular studies. And some of the "elders" of the movement must have wondered whether a "Paris gentleman" could ever be a Rebbe. Nevertheless, it was apparent to all who knew him that Menachem Mendel was suited by birth, by marriage, and by his own intellectual and spiritual gifts to be the leader of the Lubovitcher movement. For his part Menachem Mendel was genuinely reluctant to assume the leadership. He had taken courses in electrical engineering in Paris, while his wife was studying architecture, and they had planned to earn their living in these professions. It required two years to persuade him to accept the position of Rebbe.

All this, however, was past. As he mounted the dais now and took his chair, Rabbi Menachem Mendel seemed very much at ease in his role. The audience rose when he entered and remained standing until he sat down. Once seated, he turned to receive a bottle of whiskey which he passed over the table to some outstretched hands below. As if by pre-arranged signal, little paper cups and bottles of whiskey appeared on all tables in the yard.

The students on the bench in front began clapping hands and swaying back and forth in rhythmic accompaniment to a song. Everyone, including the Rebbe, participated in the singing. In the middle of one particularly animated melody, the Rebbe leaned forward and began beating out the rhythm on the table with his fists, at which the singing of the Hasidim immediately mounted in volume and intensity. The Rebbe, a slight smile on his lips, began to sway from side to side and rose from his chair. An almost physical current of excitement ran through the audience and the singing reached a fever pitch. Near a fan in the back of the courtyard a man wearing a hat which came down to his ears was jumping up and down, clapping his hands, his eyes closed as if hypnotized. Behind the Rebbe, an elderly man with a long white beard was hopping from leg to leg, waving his arms about. Then the Rebbe sat down, and at once the current of excitement subsided.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel cleared his throat and reached for the microphone. The courtyard grew quiet as the Rebbe called out several names. One of those called was sitting near me. He leaped to his feet, his face flushed and his hands trembling as he raised his cup to the Rebbe and said, *"L'chayim*—to life!" The Rebbe, with a faint smile, vigorously nodded his head in return and moved his lips in an answering *"L'chayim."* After all those he had singled out by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

name had offered toasts in this fashion, others in the room began to rise from their seats, and as soon as they had succeeded in catching the Rebbe's eye they too called out "To life!" Near me, a youngster was unable to hide a grimace of distaste as he downed his cup of strong liquor. These exchanges between the Rebbe and his Hasidim continued for about an hour, and then the Rebbe must have asked for a song because they began singing a slow melody with Yiddish words that sounded like *"Essen est zich, shlofen shloft zich, ober davenin davent zich nisht"* ("Eating and drinking take care of themselves, but not so prayer").

Only one person in the room seemed not to be singing, and that was the red-bearded rabbi standing at the Rebbe's right. He stood immobilized, staring fixedly at a spot on the table before the Rebbe. I asked my neighbor if he was by chance a Misnaged in Hasidic clothing. On the contrary, I was told, Rabbi Mintlik had the honor of being the Rabbi's cup-bearer; his feeling for the Rebbe was so intense that it had reached the level of *hitbatlut*—"self-extinction." I had heard the term *hitbatlut* several times in my conversations with the Hasidim on Eastern Parkway. The act of "extinguishing oneself" before the will and personality of the Rebbe was evidently considered one of the summits of Hasidic devotion.

After the singing was over, the Rebbe reached for the microphone and cleared his throat with a nervous little cough. As one, the *farbrengung* rose, and my neighbor informed me that we were about to "hear Torah."

HASIDISM is a mystical movement and, according to the mystic tradition, the words of the Bible have a "revealed" meaning, the *p'shat,* which serves to mask a deeper, mystical significance. These hidden meanings can be found by various modes of interpretation. There is *d'rush*—the allegorical reading of Biblical stories in which characters like Sarah and Abraham and the events of their lives are understood as illustrations of simple moral teachings; then there is *remez*—literally, the "hint," which points to profound doctrines and ideas dealing not only with the moral relations of man to man, but with the mystic connection of man and God. The most difficult level of hidden meaning is *sod*—the secret. This is concerned with cosmological and theosophical speculation. It is a realm of discourse which can be understood only by a student already familiar with the technical concepts of the Cabbala.

As soon as he began speaking, it was apparent that the Rebbe's discourse was in the realm of *sod,* and it was also obvious that very few of the Hasidim present could follow his words—after fifteen minutes or so had passed, I noticed that eyes were closing all around me, and not in mystical ecstasy. "The reason the Hasidim must stand while the Rebbe 'gives Torah,'" my neighbor whispered to me, "is that they might fall asleep if they were to sit down." For about a half hour the Rebbe continued to discourse on the secrets of the "upper and lower waters" and the "smaller and larger visages." When he concluded, we all took our seats, the singing started again, and gradually vivacity and life seemed to surge back into the gathering. There was another round of toasts, following which the Rebbe once more took the microphone.

This time no heads nodded and everyone followed his discourse. It was, in essence, a repetition of his first talk, only now brought down from *sod* to *d'rush.* He spoke in simple Yiddish, expressing his ideas clearly and carefully. The theme of the *d'rush* was that Abraham had actually been a missionary. He quoted the rabbinic commentary on God's commandment to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy land and thy birthplace," wherein the Rabbis compare Abraham to a vial of incense that must be moved about if its fragrance is to be felt. Similarly, said the Rebbe, the descendants of Abraham must never be content to remain in a place where they feel completely at home; they too must "get out of their land." Isaac also was inspired with a sense of mission, for what else is the inner meaning of the story which tells how Isaac re-dug the wells of his father?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These wells are the symbol of the living waters within the soul of every Jew, which, like the wells in the Bible, can be stopped up. But the descendants of Isaac must not be discouraged. They must try again and again to lift the stones from the wells and to free the fountain of living waters.

I found myself rather disappointed in the Rebbe's discourse. It seemed to me as though the ideas had been "stripped for action" and deprived of their complexity, perhaps their profundity. But I remembered having been told that this was the secret of Lubovitch—its capacity to "make obvious the hidden." Of course, the Rebbe was also trying to achieve a practical objective in his talk. In his audience were Lubovitcher Hasidim from New Haven or Melbourne or North Africa who longed to be with their comrades and close to their Rebbe but who in a few hours would have to return to lonely places where they were trying to "create an environment." They needed a "pep talk" such as the Rebbe had given. And I soon discovered that there was another reason for the Rebbe's missionary theme. In a few weeks several dozen students from the Yeshiva were to set out in pairs to visit almost every state in the union in an attempt to "remove the stones from the Jewish wells of spirit." I had met some of these "missionaries" in the Yeshiva. Most of them were in their early twenties and they would have preferred to stay on Eastern Parkway, but they were going out into the world because it was the wish of the Rebbe.

Taking just enough money to cover their expenses, along with matzoh and canned foods for towns where strictly kosher food was not available, these young men journeyed forth every year before the High Holidays. Often they came to communities in the South or the West where they had no contacts at all. The problem in such towns was not the puzzled stares which people cast at these bearded rabbinical students. "We're used to that," one of them said, "and after a while you don't even notice people looking at you." The difficulty was that their efforts were so rarely rewarded. In former days, when Shneur Zalman had sent emissaries to the isolated communities of the Caucasus, they had been received gratefully, and usually they succeeded in leaving behind them a re-inspired congregation or a new school. The young men today had to be satisfied with less. They tried to dispose of a few pieces of literature or to give encouragement to some elderly person who was trying to maintain a kosher diet under difficult circumstances.

Now the boys were ready to set out again, and the Rebbe asked them to stand up. After a toast had been exchanged with each one, the Rebbe called out another name. In the back of the room a man stood up, his face flushed with the honor of being called. "*Due cosos*—Two cups," the Rebbe said smiling, combining Italian with Hebrew. The Hasid had evidently come from Italy, and a murmur of pleasure passed around the room.

The Rebbe then delivered another discourse on the subject of youth, after which there was more singing, and then the cycle of discourse and song began again, continuing for several hours. It would have become very tiresome except for the fact that the Rebbe seemed to be arranging his talks so that they became shorter and lighter in tone as the hours went by. One of them, for example, was about the current craze for vacations in the country. It reminded him, said the Rebbe, of the person who had been ordered by his doctor to spend an hour every day in the fresh air of the woods. Unfortunately he lived three hours from the woods and in order to observe the doctor's prescription he ran to the woods at night after work, then ran back exhausted—but he obeyed the doctor's prescription. So it was, the Rebbe smiled, with many of us who feel we must go to the country in the summertime. The food is worse, and the train schedules are difficult. But we fulfill the commandment "to vacation in the country."

SEVERAL hours had passed, and I decided to relieve the pressure of the hard bench by taking a little walk during the next in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terval of song. Outside in the courtyard some young people were selling literature and large photographs of the Lubovitcher Rebbes. Near the entrance, some fifteen or twenty women had been standing all the evening. Several of them held young children in their arms, and most of them wore long-sleeved dresses and kerchiefs that covered their heads in Orthodox fashion. A few were dressed quite stylishly, and used make-up. I wondered if they did not resent the custom which forbade their sitting with the men or participating in the exchange of toasts with the Rebbe. The week before, I had raised this question in the home of a Lubovitcher Hasid. But both the Hasid and his wife had assured me that there was much more married happiness within the movement than in the "outside" world.

Of course, they said, most of the marriages took place within Lubovitch itself. But once in a while, the wife added with a smile, "there is an intermarriage—somebody from Lubovitch will marry somebody from the Satmer Rebbe—but even that works out." Besides, the Rebbe was quite accessible to women when it came to interviews. I had asked them about the Rebbe's family life. There was an awkward pause, and both of them dropped their heads as they informed me that the Rebbe had no children. For some reason the Master of the Universe had withheld this blessing from the man who reputedly had the power of bestowing it on others.

THE Rebbe was just beginning to speak again when I returned from my stroll. The essential purpose of the evening, he said, was to attach ourselves in spirit to the *Tsaddik,* his father-in-law, Rabbi Joseph Isaac. Such attachment was not made more difficult by the fact that the *Tsaddik* was now dead. In a way it was easier, for there were no "limitations" now to his spirit: the body no longer stood in the way of his essence. But how could we attach ourselves to a man's essence? The answer was by educating others in his ways. Therefore, the Rebbe urged, let everyone participate in this attachment and write his own name and the name of his mother on a piece of paper (so that the Rebbe might mention them in his prayers) and offer his contribution to the educational ideals and institutions of Rabbi Joseph Isaac, former Lubovitcher Rebbe.

As the papers and envelopes were being passed up to the dais, the Rebbe's humor broke out again: "Let's introduce a new custom in America—the custom of giving money joyously and with a song." His request was immediately granted.

At about 2 A.M. I left the *farbrengung,* which showed no signs of ending, and walked toward my car trying to sum up my feelings. It had been an interesting evening, and yet frustrating. There was no question about the genuineness of faith in that courtyard, but it was a faith that seemed completely beyond my own understanding and, I suspected, beyond the comprehension of most people in the 20th century.

There they were—men and women walking out of a subway station and into a courtyard where, in awe and trembling, they stood up to hear the words and receive the blessings of a man upon whom the "holy spirit" rested. What was it about the Lubovitcher tradition that could feed such springs of faith, and how did the man who gave these blessings, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, direct descendant of Shneur Zalman—how did he, who had studied science at the Sorbonne, feel about his role? Next week I had a personal appointment with the Rebbe at ten o'clock in the evening, and I wondered if he would resent my asking him these very questions.

[*A second article will follow.*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JORDAN: RISE AND FALL OF A SQUIREARCHY

A Lesson Told

RAY ALAN

"WE BOW our heads in respect and admiration for this heroic people which has dealt such a painful blow to imperialism!" Major Salah Salem, commenting thus in the Cairo daily *Ash Shaab* on the eclipse of British influence in Jordan, was, of course, indulging his customary hyperbole; but he was well on target. The blow really hurt. In deciding that even dependence on precarious Saudi-Syrian-Egyptian charity was preferable to maintaining their lucrative tie with Britain, the Jordanians hit Whitehall in a most sensitive spot. "It's their sheer barefaced perfidy, their utter *disloyalty,* that gets me," a young British official in Amman exclaimed. He was trying to digest a statement by Jordanian Premier Suleiman Nabulsi to the effect that whereas Saudi-Syrian-Egyptian financial aid would be a fundamentally fraternal transaction, British subsidies were "doled out condescendingly, month by month, as if they were a favor."

Political, economic, and even strategic realities never impinged more than superficially upon the Anglo-Jordanian relationship —whether at palace, government, embassy, or army level. It was a paternalistic, man-to-man relationship, in which the terms of a mere treaty were less important than the personalities of the Jordanian monarch and the small Anglo-Arab circle centered on him. "Loyalty" was the linchpin, and "loyalty" and "disloyalty" the only socio-political criteria. On one's first visit to Amman one would be shown the Emir (later King) Abdullah's palace dominating the town. Then the British Residency (now the embassy) would come into view—overlooking the palace. This was always good for a chuckle; but after a minute or so one's companion would clear his throat and say solemnly: "Not that this particular layout is necessary, of course: the old man's loyal as the day is long. . . ."

In 1949 a former pro-Nazi, Musa el-Husseini, who had spent much of the Second World War in Hitler's Germany (he was a kinsman of the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini), joined the staff of an important British government information service in the Levant. This seemed an odd appointment for even the local representatives of the Attlee-Bevin administration to make, and I asked a question about it in an appropriate quarter. "Well, Musa's sown a few wild oats, undoubtedly," I was told, "but that's over and done with. There's no doubt about his loyalty now." In 1955 a correspondent asked a British officer in Jordan about a rumor that Colonel (later General) Ahmed el-Jundi, the Jordan army's highest-ranking Arab officer, was impatient to step into Glubb's shoes. "Not a word of truth in it," came the reply (naturally enough). "El-Jundi's as loyal an old warhorse as you'd find anywhere."

But what, in this sort of context, did the catchwords "loyal" and "loyalty" really mean? Fundamental as the question was to Anglo-Jordanian relations, no one on the British side ever asked it. Arab thinking on such matters took less for granted, as I suddenly realized one day when three Jordanian

---

THE future of Jordan is as potentially explosive an issue as any in the Middle East, and RAY ALAN tells us what makes it so. Mr. Alan, a British journalist who has contributed steadily to these pages over the years, is a specialist in Middle Eastern affairs and has lived in many of the Arab countries. His last previous appearance in COMMENTARY was in December 1956 with "Russia Enters the Levant."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moslem friends who called on me found me reading a book entitled *Four Studies in Loyalty* by the British writer Christopher Sykes. The title baffled them. One flipped over the pages, frowning, as I tried to explain Sykes's theme. At last he exclaimed: "But it's idiotic! A man can only be loyal to a particular person or organization, for a definite purpose, and usually for a limited period. There's nothing abstract about loyalty. And why should it be considered a virtue? It must serve the interests of the person who gives it no less than of the one who receives it, otherwise it would be pointless." The others agreed.

IN WESTERN society, on the other hand, loyalty is still generally considered a virtue, admirable *per se*. It may be inspired in the first place by some friendly act or fruitful association, such as T. E. Lawrence's support of the Sharifians or Eden's co-sponsorship of the Arab League, but thereafter, the Western code insists, it should be self-perpetuating and as nearly altruistic as possible. This was the kind of loyalty successive British governments seriously expected of the Arabs—of the Jordanians in particular—and it was on the assumption that it would be forthcoming (or could be assured once certain extraneous irritants had been minimized) that Whitehall's Near Eastern policy was based from 1920 to 1950. The traditional temporizing, Vicar-of-Bray role of the Levant throughout history was overlooked; in any case, British officials would remind one dryly, the men who mattered were not the mercurial Levantine mob but its stable, hard-headed rulers, who were, of course, "true Arabs."

At the same time a curious ambivalence was discernible in Whitehall's approach. It is "one of the peculiarities" of the "true Arab"—in the words of Major C. S. Jarvis, onetime British governor of Sinai—that "throughout the ages he has managed to exist on subsidies . . . hush-money paid to him by the governments of peaceful countries in return for keeping the peace—monies handed over, not in return for doing something, but solely to refrain from doing something."* And while British officials talked airily of Arab loyalty and tried to convince themselves that the Arab ruling classes really did love Britain, deeply and altruistically, for her own sake, they saw nothing inconsistent—let alone insulting—in doling out subsidies and "hush-money" on a massive scale. Transjordan—the largely barren oddment left over from the scramble for the estates of the last Ottoman sultan, made a principality by Winston Churchill and a kingdom by Ernest Bevin—consequently achieved the melancholy distinction of becoming the modern world's first sovereign state wholly dependent on such *baksheesh*.

The British officials responsible for this development disregarded its inherent economic and psychological perils. It merely meant, as one of the most senior of them put it, that Jordan was "all sewn up": subsidies would, presumably, make Anglophiles even of such benighted Levantines as failed to respond to the call of "loyalty." Hence Whitehall's fantastic over-confidence and self-delusion, a typical harmonic of which was this description (in an article by a correspondent closely attuned to the official line) of King Abdullah's mentally unhinged and virulently anti-British son Talal, who had only a short while before threatened his father with a dagger, attempted to murder his own wife, and taken a potshot at General Glubb: "Talal is a level-headed man and has derived advantages from a small group of intelligent and far-seeing British friends. . . . Despite wretched memories of a most unhappy period at Sandhurst, Talal is fervently pro-British, progressive, and, it is felt, capable. . . ."† Hence, too, the acuteness of the shock to British officialdom when the plausible Musa el-Husseini exploited the facilities his new job provided to organize the assassination of King Abdul-

*C. S. Jarvis, *Arab Command* (London, 1942). American aid to King Saud would appear to fall into this category.

†The London *Economist*, July 15, 1950. The *Economist* is now a reformed character.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lah; when the loyal old warhorse el-Jundi was discovered to be intriguing with the Egyptians against Glubb; and when Suleiman Nabulsi, once a trusted ambassador at the Court of St. James, won the October 1956 election on a pledge to abrogate the Anglo-Jordan treaty—and confounded embassy wiseacres by fulfilling his pledge.

Among Musa el-Husseini's personal papers was found a clipping from the London *Times*, a eulogistic, editorial-page piece dated sometime in 1949 and headlined "Stability of Transjordan." The first paragraph read: "The Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan can be compared to an English eighteenth-century squirearchy. There is a strong personal bond between king and people, and a formalism and personal graciousness which are reminders of that period. There is also a real social democracy, not to be found in political textbooks, which lifts the nomads and peasants above the *fellahin* level, and often makes the visitor review previous ideas of democracy conceived in terms of the vote, the arbitration council, and protective legislation."

Some day, someone will write a monograph on the contribution of the London *Times* to the spread of Anglophobia in the Near East. The "real social democracy, not to be found in political textbooks," included such trimmings as rigged elections, a government appointed by and responsible only to the king, a ban on anti-government parties and newspapers, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and a grim internment camp out in the desert at El Bayir for persistent critics of the regime. Out of every dollar lavished on the country by the British Labor government between Abdullah's coronation and assassination, or raised by the local authorities from internal resources, fifty-eight cents were spent on the army, ten on police and prisons, and two on education. One-third of all privately owned land was (and is) held by about fifty big landowners, another third by 350 smaller ones, and the remainder by the rest of the population. An American Quaker mission was recently appalled to discover that the normal living standard of Jordanian villagers in an area which had never been affected by the Arab-Israeli dispute was lower than that maintained by UN relief among Gaza refugees.

The other Arab states, with the exception of Lebanon, were no better off. But what enraged Jordanian "intellectuals" like Musa el-Husseini was less authoritarianism as such (most of them had once been pro-Nazi) than what they took to be Whitehall's pretense that the tight little "squirearchy" in Amman was a new Arab ersatz for democracy, a blueprint for the Arab world as a whole. Unfortunately for Britain as well as Jordan, Whitehall was not pretending. From Bevin down, it believed that in Jordan it had evolved the perfect formula, and regarded the Anglo-Jordanian treaty as a model of its kind. I remember Glubb scoffing (good-humoredly) one day at the French for their crazy, if well-intentioned, idea of installing republican forms of government and the trappings of Liberty-Equality-Fraternity in Syria and Lebanon. In doing so they had dug their own grave and brought the Syrians and Lebanese to the brink of anarchy. What the Arab most appreciated in politics was a sort of sheikhly paternalism, a just but firm hand. . . .

Glubb might still have been holding down his job, and the Foreign Office's Arab experts cherishing at least a few of their illusions, had they not, in their zeal to spread the benefits of sheikhly paternalism, encouraged King Abdullah to annex the eastern half of Palestine, which, under the 1947 UN partition plan, should have formed the nucleus of an independent Palestine-Arab state. Overnight, Transjordan, with a population of 400,000, became Jordan, with a population of 1,400,000. About one-half of its new citizens were refugees—embittered, irreconcilable, nihilistic. Many were half-educated city-dwellers, well versed in the arts of agitation, who had seen the bright lights of New Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv, and were contemptuous of Abdullah's shaggy Ruritania with its "overgrown village" capital. It was inevitable that their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mores and mentality should dominate those of the largely illiterate Transjordanians, rather than, as London apparently hoped, the other way round. The British in their turn had dug themselves a grave—and one for Abdullah, too.

Not all King Abdullah's horses nor all Glubb's men could have preserved even the old Transjordan indefinitely. Socio-political evolution was bound one day to undermine the Amman "squirearchy"—and with it Britain's foothold—though the process might have been slow and would probably have allowed the Anglo-Jordan treaty to survive six or eight years longer. The annexation of eastern Palestine accelerated it frenetically, impelling it to anarchic and xenophobic extremes. Worse, Whitehall's miscalculation plunged Jordan into the vortex of impassioned inter-Arab rivalry and intrigue.

Transjordan as such had not been worth quarreling over (though Ibn Saud claimed Ma'an and Aqaba). A Jordan which included eastern Palestine, and would undoubtedly absorb Israel when (as Arab opinion expected) the Jewish state collapsed from economic inanition, was an attractive prize indeed. The old Hashemite-Saudi feud flared up afresh, with Egypt supporting the Saudis, and Syria changing sides according to who organized her last *coup d'état*. King Abdullah had ambitions of his own, of course, and informed one of his closest confidants in the fall of 1950 that when his army next marched it would be southwards (against Ibn Saud) not westwards (against Israel). But the whole Near East—outside Amman—knew he was doomed: Haj Amin's entourage in Cairo boasted of the coming payoff, and even in Tel Aviv, in the spring of 1951, I met an Israel Foreign Ministry official who was worrying about what would happen in Jordan "when" Abdullah was assassinated.

The blow fell in July 1951. Talal succeeded his father in an atmosphere of popular rejoicing, and approved a new, more nearly democratic constitution. Nationalist circles crowed that he would have the British out within a year. As it happened, it was Talal who was out first, declared insane and succeeded by his seventeen-year-old son Hussein the following summer.

Hussein was hastily packed off on the by now traditional kingship course—Harrow and Sandhurst—which Whitehall prescribes for Near Eastern princelings; and in 1954 the first election of his reign was held under the aegis of Tawfiq Abul-Huda, one of the Hashemite family's most faithful old retainers. Pro-government candidates were helped to victory by the judicious distribution of "army votes." (A candidate representing the leading refugee group told me that Premier Abul-Huda asked him openly: "Would you like me to get Glubb to send you a box of soldiers' votes?") Of the 40 seats in the new parliament, 35 went to pro-government candidates. Yet, such was the pressure of Jordan's emergent public opinion, in a little over a year these same hand-picked deputies were clamoring for abrogation of the Anglo-Jordan treaty.

The British themselves touched off the clamor. Whitehall had begun to suspect Secretary of State John Foster Dulles of toying with the idea of "working through the Turks" in the Moslem world and disregarding Britain's admittedly battered claim to Near Eastern expertise. Turkey had for years maintained friendly relations with Israel; but now, suddenly, her leaders were pandering to anti-Israel fanaticism in the Arab states. President Celal Bayar, visiting Jordan in November 1955, even declared that Turkish troops would fight side by side with the Jordanians against Israel if the need arose—and urged Jordan to join the Baghdad Pact. Hereupon, Whitehall decided to take a hand. If Secretary Dulles really wanted Jordan in the Baghdad Pact, Britain would give him a showroom demonstration of how such things ought to be done.

The British ambassador and General Glubb pronounced the omens propitious. No less a recruiting sergeant than the Chief of the Imperial Staff in person, General Sir

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerald Templer, was assigned to the operation. The inducements he was authorized to offer were lavish. In the words of a Jordanian cabinet minister, "they would have solved all our immediate economic and military problems." Hints were dropped in Amman political circles to the effect that, once the Jordanian and Iraqi armies had been built up, the Tripartite Declaration (guaranteeing the Arab-Israel status quo) would be annulled—thereby, by implication, leaving Israel at their mercy, since Israel was still to be denied Western arms. Kites bearing the same marking were flown in London by the *Economist* and *Times*.

But it was an end to British influence in Jordan, and the kind of regime Britain had maintained, that articulate Jordanian opinion wanted—even more urgently, it seemed, than an end to Israel. Jordanian leaders of all political colors rallied to a common pledge not to allow themselves to be diverted from the struggle for "true national freedom" by these "typical imperialist maneuvers": priority must be given, they declared, to abrogation of the Anglo-Jordan treaty and the dismissal of Glubb and other British officers. Even Foreign Minister Samir er-Rifai, for long considered in Amman an instrument of British policy, associated himself with this stand and criticized General Templer's table-pounding. "Such tactics," he said, "may still work in Iraq, but Jordan has evolved more than the West appears to realize." Whitehall, however, refused to take the hint. "It is not true to say that Jordanian opinion is opposed to the Baghdad Pact," bleated Lord John Hope, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to the House of Commons.

Egyptian and Communist agitation and Saudi money undoubtedly helped aggravate the rioting the Templer mission touched off; but no competent observer could doubt the genuine intensity of native Jordanian feeling. Troops mutinied, officials went on strike, communications were disrupted, and two governments fell in quick succession. "Please ignore the shooting," the Jordanian commander of Old Jerusalem said in a message to his Israeli opposite number. "This is a strictly domestic affair." Westerners were stoned and Western consulates attacked. The Turkish consulate in Old Jerusalem was set on fire: its staff, like many British, French, and American officials, had to be evacuated for safety—to Israel. (So much for President Bayar's descent into neo-Bevinism.) A few weeks later, to round off the episode, King Hussein dismissed General Glubb and delivered effective control of his army to an embryonic junta of young Palestinian officers headed by thirty-four-year-old General Ali Abu-Nuwar.

General Abu-Nuwar owed his promotion partly to his knowledge of Parisian night life, partly to his skill in playing on the young king's inferiority complex vis-à-vis the British. Marked down as "a bit Bolshie" by a British brother-officer, he had been posted to Paris as military attaché to get him out of the way. There, in due course, he met Hussein, over on a brief private visit, and volunteered to show him the sights. During the sightseeing he told the king the whole Jordanian army was counting on him to save its honor by "Arabizing" it.

No one had ever taken the sensitive, highly strung Hussein seriously before. With Glubb and the condescending "old gang" politicians in Amman he was pathetically ill at ease. Even his marriage had been announced by a court official before he had made up his mind; and even his wife, eight years his senior, was so notoriously his intellectual superior that Amman wags jeered that she gave him lessons at home. Abu-Nuwar's confidence undoubtedly touched and flattered him, and shortly afterwards the young attaché was recalled to Amman as the king's senior aide.

Glubb's dismissal slaked Hussein's thirst for British blood; and Abu-Nuwar, now army commander, needed time and calm in which to consolidate his new position. Both were willing to settle for an increased British subsidy—which London agreed to pay—and a period of tranquillity. But Hussein's own extravagant tub-thumping, in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flush of his triumph over Glubb, had fanned the expectations of the mob to an inflammatory heat. "After Glubb, the treaty!" chanted Amman agitators. "Abrogation!" roared hitherto docile deputies, prisoners of the popular mood. Desperate to gain time, the wavering "old gang" government of Said el-Mufti advised King Hussein to dissolve parliament and call a general election. The vote was held on October 21, 1956. Its outcome was the shout that brought down the Sinai-Suez avalanche.

THERE was no question this time of tilting the scales with "army votes." Glubb's services were no longer available. Tawfiq Abul-Huda committed suicide in the first week of the electoral campaign, and his political associates, grouped in the previously "loyal" Constitutionalist Bloc, startled the British embassy by announcing that they, too, now favored abrogation of the Anglo-Jordan treaty. Treaty abrogation was advocated by eight candidates out of ten; the only other issue was that of closer ties with Egypt.

Whitehall, however, appeared not only to have learned nothing from a decade of debacles but to be intent on flaunting its refusal to learn. Once again its information services pulled out of the same depleted bag of tricks the same weary old bogey. The Anglo-Jordan treaty, they cried, is Jordan's first line of defense against Israel: the need of the hour is not abrogation but national unity against the Jews. King Hussein collaborated by declaring that the UN truce chief, General Burns, had warned him the Israelis were massing troops for an invasion. General Burns's HQ denied that any such warning had been issued, but at once Iraqi Premier Nuri es-Said chimed in with a statement that the Iraqi army was standing by to rush to Jordan's aid in the event of Israeli aggression. Jordanian opinion was unimpressed: it knew Nuri was looking for a pretext to send his troops into Jordan and either manipulate the election to his liking or (as some British officials favored) postpone it altogether. Israel, however, declared that she would regard an Iraqi move into Jordan as a hostile act, since Iraq had never signed an armistice with her. This was the cue for Whitehall to announce that if Israeli forces entered Jordan to forestall an Iraqi occupation, Britain would go to Jordan's defense.

For the next few days the Levant buzzed with rumors of an impending Anglo-Israeli war, and a whole battery of instruments of British policy appeared suddenly to have been assigned to the task of making them sound convincing. Whitehall's "covert" Arabic-language Near East Broadcasting Station (Sharq el-Adna) on Cyprus turned up the volume of its anti-Israel output. British troops in Jordan began manipulating guns in sites where they could be seen by the greatest number of passers-by. Hunter jet-fighters were sent to Cyprus to scream across the rooftops of Amman the implication that they were there for possible action against Israel. (Both these stunts backfired to some extent when Egyptian propaganda alleged that the British aim was to intimidate the Jordanian electorate.)

To the observer who was in the Near East during Bevin's heyday all this seemed grimly familiar. It was as if the calendar had suddenly been put back eight or nine years. And yet, somehow, it failed to convince—even in the context of a Jordanian general election. It was all too shrill; everyone was trying too hard; and it went on for far too long. A week after the election Sharq el-Adna was still calling for "Arab unity to destroy Israel." "The British embassy must have forgotten to inform Cyprus that our election is over," commented one of the station's own Jordanian employees. Forty-eight hours later Israeli forces were driving deep into Sinai; and Sharq el-Adna, after announcing that it had been "requisitioned," was broadcasting communiqués warning Egyptian civilians to keep clear of military targets.

The Jordanian election result had served notice on Israel and Britain that the Near Eastern power balance was tilting sharply against them. It returned to the Amman par-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liament a pro-Egyptian majority committed to abrogation of the Anglo-Jordan treaty. It emboldened Colonel Abdel Nasser imperiously to bundle Jordan into his Egyptian-dominated tripartite (Egypt-Syria-Jordan) military command—without even waiting for a new Jordanian government to be formed. "A noose has been completed with which we shall strangle Israel," a Cairo government daily commented. The command agreement also provided for intensified Egyptian-organized *fedayeen* raids into Israel from Jordanian territory. And when the victorious National Socialist leader Suleiman Nabulsi did at last form his "left nationalist" government, he announced that on all basic issues he would closely follow Cairo's lead.

Suleiman Nabulsi has already fulfilled his essential election promises. He will probably go down in Jordanian history—if Jordan survives long enough to have a history—as the country's first prime minister to do so. But very soon now he will have to come face to face with reality, a phenomenon his election campaign overlooked.

The thirty-six million dollars a year promised Jordan by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria to replace British subsidies amounts to little more than just another mirage. The same states have failed in the recent past to redeem pledges to finance a potash industry for Jordan costing only eleven million dollars at the northern end of the Dead Sea, and to contribute to the upkeep of the Jordanian National Guard. Syria herself is in debt to Saudi Arabia, and both she and Egypt are cutting imports to make ends meet. Even King Saud owes several months' overdrawn royalties to Aramco and, as this is written, is passing round a golden begging bowl in Washington. A high proportion of the promised Saudi-Syrian-Egyptian aid, moreover, will take the form of obsolescent military equipment. All this is cold comfort for a state whose budget has never yet been balanced without external aid and whose imports exceed its exports in value by seven to one.

Voices have already been raised in Damascus demanding that Syria's share of the proposed Arab subsidy to Jordan be withheld until King Hussein has "clarified" the anti-Communist statement he made at the beginning of February. This was a violation of the strictly neutralist principles animating the Cairo Pact countries, Syrian leftists say, and implied acceptance of the Western argument in the Cold War.

Spokesmen for King Hussein have assured strictly Arab gatherings that the statement—like the decree issued two days later banning the circulation of Communist propaganda media in the country—was considered advisable in order to induce the United States Point Four administration to hasten consideration of a Jordanian request for thirty million dollars in economic aid. It did not mean that the king favored a political or military rapprochement with America, though he would be pleased to go to Washington, if invited, to do what he could to speed up the flow of dollars. But those Jordanians who voted last October for the government National Socialist and Socialist Resurrection parties are more likely to be alienated than reconciled by such assurances. This section of Jordanian opinion is increasingly republican in sentiment, considering Hussein's expensive court, cars, and capers an unjustifiable burden on the country's economy, and has opened a campaign for union with Syria, where the Socialist Resurrection party is paramount. No mention is made of Hussein in its campaign slogans but those who subscribe to them realize that the only kind of union acceptable to Syrians would be a republican one. The Jordanian and Syrian foreign ministers, both Socialist Resurrectionists, admit that they are feeling their way toward "a union of some kind." Recently they agreed on a partial fusion of the Syrian and Jordanian diplomatic services (the latter has already been severely purged), with the result that Syrian diplomats will in the near future also represent Jordanian interests in all but four or five major capitals. They have also planned an economic union, but before this could be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

realized Jordan would have to leave the sterling area, a step which the king is opposing.

THE British, meanwhile, are hard at work packing their crates. Even the officials who fought last year's rear-guard action appear more relieved than distressed to be rid of a commitment which, in the end, was no more than a financial burden and a politico-military embarrassment. The Amman airfield was evacuated, under Jordanian pressure, last fall. At Aqaba, in the extreme south, fewer than 1,300 troops remain. Britain's only other "asset" is her costly incomplete base at Mafraq. This is now admitted to be a strategic white elephant. Its construction was more a political demonstration than a military necessity. Its very site—only ten miles from Jordan's wide-open frontier with unstable Syria—proclaims the quality of Whitehall's thinking on the subject. Even for fuel Mafraq is dependent on Syrian good will, and the services of civilian contractors who must transport it from Lebanon over vertiginous mountain roads. Water is brought in by truck from Zerka, twenty miles to the south. Last November a truck drivers' strike deprived Mafraq of water for ten days and forced stringent rationing on the base. An RAF staff officer said afterwards: "One Communist driver could have poisoned the lot of us."

Once the British leave, Mafraq's 3,000-yard runways, in their turn, may be expected in due course to play host to Soviet-built Migs. For the likeliest long-term outlook for the northern half of Jordan, at least, is a merger with Syria, even if the current union campaign achieves nothing substantial. Southern Jordan (Ma'an and Aqaba) seems destined to go to Saudi-Arabia unless the Iraqis move in first. Saudi propagandists are already hard at work to convince the southern population that the roads of Arabia are paved with Aramco gold. Union with Iraq has many advocates in the upper strata of Jordanian society, but it would only find favor with the masses if the present Iraqi oligarchy were overthrown and replaced by a "left-nationalist" Syrian-type regime. For the time being, Iraq is reduced to shouting on the sidelines. Baghdad radio is loudly accusing the Socialist Resurrectionists, the Syrians, the Egyptians, and General Abu-Nuwar and his friends of preparing to overthrow King Hussein. It would be surprising if some of them weren't.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE TOBACCONIST

A Story

DANNIE ABSE

CLEARLY, having only four shillings to my name I needed a job. At least until the end of the week when, for my mother's sweet sake, Uncle Monty might advance me some money. The porter at the medical school told me about the tobacconist's round the corner which had the little notice in the window: *Part-time Assistant Required.* "Furthermore, sir," the porter said, as an afterthought, "he's a Jewish gentleman and that should help you."

"How do you mean?" I asked bristling.

"No offense, sir—but it won't hurt, will it? You being Jewish and he being Jewish. The same persuasion, after all. It counts, sir. It counts, yes. I knew a bloke once what gave a man a job because he had one arm. The employer, you see, also had one arm. Get it? A sense of community, sir."

"Well, thanks anyway," I said, mumbling.

"As a matter of fact and here's the funny thing. The employer had a left arm missing and the bloke what got the job had his right arm sawn off. Swear to God. It's an odd world, all right."

I relaxed, knowing there was no anti-Semitism in this, and my smile encouraged the bald porter to elaborate further.

"Course this Mr. Goldstein—that's the name of this here tobacconist—is a bit odd himself. Eccentric like. Proper barmy really. You'll see."

And I did see. I went that morning when the other medical students of my year were at Sir Harold Tanner's "Outpatients," taking case histories.

The tobacconist shop was on the other side of the road. The traffic lights, I assumed, still had not changed from red. Anyway, the queue of London buses, vans, cars, and lorries had hardly jerked into movement when I dodged and squeezed between bumpers. I glared back at a driver who seemed to have bizarre, evil intentions toward all pedestrians. He bashed down on the apparatus of the hooter, his face deliciously purple. "You clot! You blithering idiot! You stupid cow!" he yelled, poor chap. I answered back of course, after my own fashion, but he proved to own only a small monotonous vocabulary which hampered normal conversational intercourse. Accordingly I turned toward the small drab tobacconist's. In the window, as the porter had said, a card had been put up on which had been typewritten the relevant advertisement. Above the shop I read the brown-gold lettering which had flaked to: B. V. GOL ST IN.

I decided that the best approach was to casually buy twenty cigarettes and then, afterward, even more casually, ask about the job. Also by such procrastination I might gain some glimpse of Mr. Goldstein's promised eccentricity as well as discover his method of serving customers, a method which I soon hoped to emulate. I forgot about the berserk motorist and opened the door, making a bell ring. With its shutting, the sound of traffic muffled outside.

The shop itself was remarkable only for its shabbiness. Behind a decrepit counter stacks of shelves carrying dummy cigarette cartons climbed up the wall and beneath a dusty glass case some unlikely pipes were spread out. Nearby a cash register waited optimistically. The electric bulb, I noted, threw down its yellow, second-hand glare on to a single housefly. It zigzagged beneath

---

DANNIE ABSE's new novel, *Some Corner of an English Field,* recently issued under the imprint of Criterion Books, will soon be reviewed in our pages. Dr. Abse, who received his degree in medicine in London, now lives in that city. He was born in South Wales in 1928.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the bulb back and fore at an astonishing speed. I watched it, hypnotized, my head jerking from side to side until I asserted my will power and came out of the trance to face my prospective employer, who, however, was not in the shop. He stood, in fact, the other side of a glass pane, oblivious of, or indifferent to, my presence. Mr. Goldstein, a small, kyphotic, elderly man, seemed to be slicing up meat on a wooden table. Unaccountably he wore a trilby hat which immediately I felt he never discarded. Probably he kept the damn thing on in bed and in his morning bath.

I partially opened the front door again, causing the bell to burr continuously, and Mr. Goldstein glanced up through the window pane before continuing his ritual of slicing up meat. The bell, unused to such high-pressure insistence, mumbled into a purr, then clicked, hiccuped, and finally died into silence. Guiltily I closed the door. A fine start to any interview, I thought, breaking the poor fellow's bell.

I WAITED there patiently, disconcerted. Eccentric, the porter had said. It was different anyway. After all, Castle Road was a reasonably fashionable street, though off the main thoroughfare. Most of the shops round and about were up to the minute, their proprietors having been to America and come back to London with new ideas and blood pressure. The result was that the assistants in them were quick, smart, predatory, and all teeth. Certainly that was true of the bookshop down the road where, if you put down a book you had decided not to buy, the assistant would glide over to you in a flash, as if on roller skates. Right away he'd pick the thing up, rub it with a sleeve, blow away imaginary dust, and stare at your fingers as if they were covered with black currant jam. But Mr. Goldstein obviously had his own business methods: he eventually hauled himself up to come into the shop and shuffle behind the counter. He wore his hat, which was a little too big for him, absolutely straight, the brim exactly horizontal and low on his forehead.

"What do you want?" he moaned.

"Cigarettes."

"Capstan?" he queried.

"No, Players."

"Players. You want Players? How many?"

"Twenty, please."

"Twenty! Nah. I don' have Players."

"Well, Senior Service. Twenty."

"They don' make 'em in twenties."

That floored me. It really did. I must have bought thousands of packets of twenty Senior Service. By now, I should own shares in the firm. My face ought to be on the advertisement hoardings.

"You want to go to Spain to get *twenty* Senior Service," Mr. Goldstein said. "They don' make 'em in twenties in *this* country. Where've you been living? You can have a hundred, if you like."

The door opened and the bell, to my astonishment, rang clear and loud. Its irritated noise fairly clamored in the dusty, stuffy air before choking into soundlessness as the new customer closed the door behind him. Mr. Goldstein screwed up his eyes and stared at the bell above the shop door.

"Twenty Capstan," said the other man, after looking over his shoulder toward the bell to see what Mr. Goldstein was staring at.

"No Capstan," Mr. Goldstein said, lowering his head at last.

"Players then."

"I've only got 'em in fifties," Mr. Goldstein answered. The man hesitated for a moment, in a state of indecision; jerked his eyes toward me distastefully before agreeing to buy fifty. He handed over a pound note to Mr. Goldstein, who fussed with the change. The man said "Thank you," the door opened, the bell rang, the man went out.

"I must finish cutting up the horse meat for my dog," said Mr. Goldstein.

"Twenty Gold Flake," I said firmly, thinking I must complete some sort of transaction before coming to the real point of my visit.

"I can only spare you ten."

"Thank you. Thank you very much," I emphasized, trying to make a good impression. "Most kind of you."

He only looked at me suspiciously before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

saying, "Well, you can have twenty Capstan. Is it my fault that I'm a bit low in my stocks of Gold Flake?" His red-rimmed old eyes flickered. "Anyway a boy like you shouldn't smoke really," he continued. I hastily agreed and added, "Yes, it's deleterious to one's health."

"Nah," he answered, "that's propaganda. But it stops you growing. And you're still a growing boy. For why do you want to smoke? Look at me. I'm a small man. I smoked too early. Smoked haddock's all right, smoked herrings, smoked salmon. But smoking, nah. Don't smoke. You could grow tall as Romeo."

"I'm twenty," I said intimidated. (What did I say that for? Why did I insist on telling my age? I had nothing to be ashamed of. Most older people had to be twenty at one time or another. My age had nothing to do with him. All I wanted was a job. You don't have to go around showing your birth certificate to everybody.)

A DOG started to bark and he turned away from me, taking the yellow carton of Gold Flake with him. I had plenty of time. Even if he didn't hire me I had missed Sir Harold Tanner's "Outpatients" anyway. In any case, my relationship with Sir Harold had deteriorated of late. Only last week at his ward round I had said that I thought I could feel a slight lump in some patient's abdomen and Sir Harold had mocked my sincere remarks. He said sharply that there was no such word as "slight" in Medicine. "A woman, for example," he continued, "is pregnant or not pregnant. She can't be slightly pregnant." The other students had laughed. That Sir Harold Tanner is an academic pedant. Yes, I had plenty of time all right. Anyway Mr. Goldstein, apart from being my potential employer, was beginning to interest me. He opened a back door and a dog wagged his way into the shop.

"A do-og is a man's best friend. You read philosophy?" Mr. Goldstein asked. "Besides, he's all I got. So what more do I want? A nice shop, educated customers, and a dog. Round here, people don' work with their hands," he explained. "It's an educated district."

I agreed, hoping that he didn't think I was fawning. He bent down, joints creaking like a tree in the wind, to give the dog a gentle smack. It blinked its brown eyes and thumped its tail, bang, bang, on the wooden floor boards.

"People die," said Mr. Goldstein, nodding his head up and down slowly in synchronized rhythm with his speech. "Wives die, brothers die, cousins go to America. But dogs. Nah. If a dog gets run over you get yourself a new dog. It takes time—but you get a new one. At my age, a new wife is not so easy to get. I tell you, a living do-og is better than a dead lion."

"I like dogs," I said.

He bent his head to one side as if listening to distant footsteps, but then said: "Think of the dogs that have become proverbial. There's Argus, Beautiful Joe, Jip Katmir. Rin Tin Tin. Oi, a breed worth a fortune. So who wants a cat?" He showed me the palms of his hands and continued: "All right to wear in Brighton. *Schmatters.*"

I smiled and he smiled and then he shook his head again but this time from side to side, not up and down. "Cats are no good. No good. They stay out all night. Abraham here," he said, pointing to the dog, "he sleeps at my feet. Every night. At my feet. Would a woman do better? Noch, he doesn't even snore, do you, Abie?" The dog, who was of some indeterminate breed, but smelt like an airedale, thumped his tail crack bang on the floor assenting and the bell rang once more. This time a girl entered and incongruously Mr. Goldstein raised his hat.

"Ten Craven A, please," she said.

"You want to go to Paraguay to get Craven A," he said. And then to me, "I gotta relative in Paraguay, in Villarrica. Never writes to me."

"He's run out of Craven A," I said to the girl who stood there disbelieving what she had heard.

"Dunhill then," she said stridently.

"Dunhill? A pipe, you want? They don' make cigarettes." Her face stiffened into the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mask of amazement: "But they do," she said.

"Here," he said, "twenty Players. All right?"

After she went out, Mr. Goldstein fussed putting my packet of Gold Flake on the shelf and placing the Capstan dummy packets under the counter. As he did so he muttered about women smoking and what a disgrace it was. In his day no respectable woman smoked, not even in the educated districts. "Soon," he said, "do-ogs will be smoking."

"Mr. Goldstein," I asked, "why don't you give people the brand of cigarettes they want?"

HE PUT his hands near the cash register. They rested on the wood independently of his body, white as flour and coursed by small blue veins. The dog stood on his hind legs with his paws on the counter also so that four brown eyes stared at me.

"Give 'em what they want? What you mean? I give everybody what they ask for if I got it. The trouble . . . *is*. Do they know? Sometimes a man can't have everything. Things are denied him. Did I want my wife and only son to die? God doesn't say yes to everything. Maybe that's what makes a man. Take Jonah. Did Jonah get straightaway what he asked for? And Job? And King David—what did he do to get what he wanted? He killed Uriah," Mr. Goldstein suddenly shouted. "He killed a man. He took away life which is beautiful, unique, and holy. Was this right? Nah. It shouldn't be too easy for people. . . ."

Was Mr. Goldstein mad? But take Sir Harold Tanner. With his pedantry, he was just as queer. Or that crazy motorist who went purple in the face merely because I dodged in front of his bumpers. He swore and turned every decent adjective of our language that Shakespeare had used into something cheap and filthy and ugly. Nobody would say Sir Harold or that motorist were mad. So why Mr. Goldstein?

"Now I must feed my dog," he said. He started to shuffle toward the back of the shop and the big dog barked and jumped almost knocking little Mr. Goldstein over.

"Oh, Mr. Goldstein," I called after him, "are you looking for an assistant?"

He stopped and tried to silence his dog.

"An assistant? For why do I need an assistant? Should I look for somebody to spoil my business? Smoke the cigarettes, steal the money, insult the customers. No, thank you. No, no, thank you."

"But the notice," I said deflated, "the notice in the window." He came back to the counter and looked me up and down like a tailor about to fit a dummy. The dog whined and sat down.

"The notice," he said. "Propaganda. Helps to bring in customers. It makes people stop outside and read it. Draws attention to the shop. Sometimes I change it to Budgerigar lost. Five pounds reward. Good business, eh? People look, the shmooks. So gullible. You'd be surprised."

"Oh," I said, "then there's no job?"

Mr. Goldstein hesitated. "Well, I do need a dog walker. You want to be a dog walker? Abraham needs exercise. Someone to take him every day for a stroll. I'm too old. I take him for a ride on the Number 13 bus most evenings. But it's not the same thing. A dog needs fresh air, lampposts," he smiled. "Come into the back and we can draw up a contract."

Doubtfully I followed him. We stood the other side of the glass pane and I noticed on the sideboard a photograph of Mr. Goldstein at least fifteen years younger. A handsome woman and a young man of my own age smiled at the same camera on each faded side of him. He followed my gaze and just nodded his head up and down but said nothing except "My loved ones."

Eventually he took out a cigar from the top drawer, lit it and blew out smoke. "From Venezuela," he said. "Oi, if you want a cigar with smoke in it, go to Venezuela. . . . Now about this dog-walking. How do I know if you can handle dogs? Have you references? Daniel might have been good with lions, but with a do-og. Nah." He flicked some ash on to the floor. "Noah," he said, "was a different proposition."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEO-CONSERVATISM AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

Traditional Impulse and Radical Idea

RICHARD CHASE

BY NOW the "new conservatism" is an old story. What has not been noticed, however, is the attempt to square American literature with conservative opinion in morals, politics, and religion. This attempted revaluation has taken various forms, some of them ingenious, and it is still going on. But like the new conservatism itself, the new account of our literature is based on certain false notions about American culture.

True, there has been a wider response among the American people to the intellectual conservatism of the 1950's than there was to the intellectual radicalism of the 1930's, which, despite the higher quality of mind that went into it, was never able to affect very lastingly the vast complacency of the American middle classes. Yet this broad social base upon which the conservative theoreticians rest has failed to give any noticeable moral solidity to the new conservatism. Nor have the conservatives been able to evolve a convincing ideology in support of their position.

Edmund Burke is the authority most often appealed to by the new conservatives, and writers like Russell Kirk and Peter Viereck have argued from the precepts of Burke to the practice of American politics and American life. But the fact remains that, as someone has said, "In America Edmund Burke is Thomas Jefferson." This statement contains the truth I want to bring forth in these pages—namely, that the inherited quality of American cultural life depends on a discontinuity between conservative feeling and liberal ideas. As was true of Jefferson, all our impressive and historically successful ideas are liberal or radical, although some of our most important impulses are conservative. But conservative as these impulses are, they are not translatable into ideas, political or otherwise. They are impulses which tend to remain private and personal; like all conservative impulses they urge moderation of behavior and attachment to habit. But their source is distinctly not a sense of evolving political, social, or religious life in their institutional forms—that is Burke's sense of things. The source of the conservative impulse in America, as is shown by our literature, is that nostalgia for the simpler, happier way of life which we Americans have felt from the beginning always to be receding into the oblivion of the past. We value with our conservative instincts that which history has already rendered irrelevant to the formation of our ideas.

This discontinuity between emotion and thought is in marked contrast to the more nearly organic cultural life of England, which lent relevance to Burke's appeal from tradition and instinct to idea, to his derivation of conservative ideas from conservative emotions. The ship of the new conservatism in this country sinks on the rock—or rather, among the shoals—of the discontinuities of American life.

Lionel Trilling is thus correct to say that "in the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition." Mr. Trilling's state-

---

RICHARD CHASE here resumes the running commentary on the latest trends in literature which he began in July 1955 with "Is There a Middle Way in Culture?" and continued in September 1956 with "Middlebrow England," and in January of this year with "Radicalism in the American Novel." This article was originally delivered as a lecture before the Barnard College Seminar in American Civilization. Mr. Chase is associate professor of English at Columbia and has written books on Melville, Emily Dickinson, and Whitman.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment elicited much comment, both pro and con, when it appeared in 1950, in the preface to *The Liberal Imagination*, but it was true then and it is not appreciably less true now. He went on to say that

> it is the plain fact that nowadays there are no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation. This does not mean, of course, that there is no impulse to conservatism or to reaction. Such impulses are certainly very strong, perhaps even stronger than most of us know. But the conservative impulse and the reactionary impulse do not, with some isolated and some ecclesiastical exceptions, express themselves in ideas but only in action or in irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas.

To Mr. Trilling this state of affairs suggested that the proper subject of the moralist and critic was liberalism. To many people it also suggested that conservative ideas should be refurbished or conjured up. And during recent years, while this process of refurbishing and conjuring has been going on, it has become a cliché, as often uttered by liberals as by conservatives, that we would benefit if there were more intellectually respectable conservative ideas around.

I do not think we would, because the real life of our culture is in the perennially unresolved contradiction between our conservative feelings and our radical ideas. The life of our emotions, our fantasies, our literature, our daily manners and morals—this shared cultural life is not at home on a middle ground whereon radical and conservative ideas have been dialectically engaged and a compromise achieved. The vital conflict, the energizing dialectic of American life, is the opposition of idea to instinct and impulse, and not the opposition of idea to idea.

To be sure, practical statesmanship and a successful and humane politics depend in this country, as in any other, on a perpetual compromise of ideas. And this fact has led to the familiar suggestion that American politics would be more rational and social progress facilitated if our political parties represented competing ideologies, instead of both of them being liberal-conservative coalitions with no stake in winning an election beyond the spoils and the glory. Doubtless something might be gained if a new alignment should emerge which would place conservatives in one party and liberals in the other. Yet history has gradually brought about a two-party system in which, despite certain differences of policy and tradition, both parties tend to mirror the national mentality as a whole. Both parties draft platforms drawn from the principles of radical democracy and, except in periods of acute crisis, conduct themselves in office largely according to conservative instinct, prejudice, and habit.

Among present-day Congressmen there are no conservative ideas worthy of the name. The opponents of segregation appeal to the great ideas of democracy; they speak in the name of the Bill of Rights. But except for a few romantic ideologues, the segregationists do not cite Calhoun. Their argument is a non-ideological realism which openly appeals to instinct, prejudice, and habit (as has William Faulkner in his recent comments on segregation).

Despite the notable shortcomings of our two-party system, it is the right and inevitable one under American conditions. The perennial ineffectiveness and inertia of Congress are not the result of the ideological weakness of the conservatives but of the reactionary quality of their conservative impulse, combined with the uncertainty and timidity of the liberals. The vitality of American political life thus depends on a twofold dialectic—the dialectic between conservative impulse and liberal idea and the dialectic among liberal ideas.

What is true of our general culture is also true of our best and most characteristic literature. This literature will be found to express conservative sentiments and radical ideas. The deepest emotions of Walt Whitman—that much neglected and misunderstood mirror image of America—are retrospective and nostalgic, although he vividly expresses the radical ideology of our democracy. This contradiction is also to be discovered in more profound and more dra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

matic writers like Melville and Faulkner, who sometimes express liberal democratic values. Yet the real concern of these writers is with contradiction as such—they are concerned, that is, with those native conflicts of our culture out of which have evolved our conservative impulses and our radical ideas.

Faulkner does not propound a conservative position or ideology of any sort, although many good critics claim that he does. Nor is Melville a classicist or humanist, as some conservative critics claim. Hawthorne still looks like the same sturdy democrat and skeptic in morals and religion that he always was, yet lately several theses and essays maintain that he is Thomistic, and in a recent study of his writings by Hyatt Howe Waggoner he is presented as a conservative Christian humanist. Many people nowadays seem to take a secret satisfaction in having learned from a mass-circulation magazine that Hemingway, although not doctrinally a Catholic, often slips off to attend mass. Other people, probably not the same ones, seemed to be moved a few years ago when John Dos Passos came out for Senator Taft for President—Dos Passos, who had once proclaimed militantly from the left: "All right, we are two nations." And since I have mentioned Senator Taft, it may be worth going on to say that he was like most American writers in that his conservatism was impulsive and nostalgic. Ideologically he was as different from Edmund Burke as possible; he was what he called himself, an old-fashioned liberal. But his guiding passion, like that of many men of his class and generation, was a longing for an earlier, simpler, more hardy, more nearly Anglo-Saxon America, before the great waves of immigration, before big business and big government. This is a feeling expressed by many of our so-called regionalist writers.

It is not surprising that Edith Wharton is another writer who has been claimed for conservatism. But Blake Nevius, who has written the best book on Mrs. Wharton, is surely illogical to conclude that she is a traditional Christian humanist. If this novelist has any ultimate intellectual commitment, it is to a pessimistic naturalism not far removed from that of certain novelists considerably less intelligent than herself, such as Dreiser. True, she looks back with nostalgia to the brief ascendancy of her class, the old New York mercantile bourgeoisie which until 1870 was able to maintain a patrician way of life. The patrician way of life described in Mrs. Wharton's novels urges one not only to envy its wealth and amenity but to feel a certain piety toward civilization itself—a piety which the triumphant new plutocracy that overwhelmed Mrs. Wharton's class knew not at all. But, as she herself shows, her class was intellectually bankrupt.

THE case of Edith Wharton reminds us that an important literary source of the new conservatism is the attempt, bogus or valid, of the upper middle class to imagine itself as an aristocracy. In this cultural fantasy Henry Adams and Henry James figure prominently. In evolving an imagination of conservatism, these writers look back to Burke, who made the first distinctively modern effort to infuse the bourgeoisie with aristocratic values. The Burke they remind us of, however, is not the realistic political historian but the romantic moralist and elegist of aristocracy. Burke was apparently the first writer to use a phrase which is nowadays on everybody's lips: "the moral imagination." In an eloquent passage where Burke is telling us (in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*) what the revolutionaries propose to do, he says:

> All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

Ideas furnished by the moral imagination, as we see, though ratified by the understanding, are suffused with the sentiments of the heart. And the heart is moved not only by humane sympathies but by attachment

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to habit, tradition, and ancient prejudice. Burke knew well the danger of modern abstractions and ideologies when these are allied with revolutionary politics. But he was not sufficiently aware that the moral imagination can as easily smother and destroy valuable ideas as humanize dangerous abstractions. Obviously there can be no free dialectic of ideas until there is a free dialectic of impulse and intelligence, so that intelligence can function with provisional autonomy. The aim of conservatism is always to close out the possibility of dialectic.

LIKE most of the great conservatives Burke has at the back of his moral imagination the image of a woman insulted, in this case Marie Antoinette. Let us waive the famous undergraduate question of whether this particular woman was worthy of Burke's expostulation. The important thing is his symbolic use of her, making her stand for the humane values of the inherited civilization for which countless brave spirits have labored, suffered, and died. The moral imagination, as Burke uses the term, is the imagination of chivalry, of *noblesse,* the imagination of civilization itself considered as a sacred and costly inheritance. He conceives of the imagination as a sort of knight who selflessly dashes to the rescue of the insulted lady and then enthrones her as the vessel and custodian of culture. It is not Burke's fault if the imagination is forced to enthrone civilization in a shaky temple around which swirl the threatening hordes of "sophists, economists, and calculators"—the hordes, that is, of liberals, commercialists, scientists, rationalists, reformers, shysters, and presumptuous petty-bourgeois *arrivistes* who have made the modern world.

Henry Adams, as he tells us in his *Education* and *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres,* felt that civilization was similarly beleaguered. Probably the most affecting passage in his works is his description of the Virgin at Chartres. He pictures the Virgin as the proliferating symbol of culture. She has that final superior innocence and simplicity which all the great poets of conservatism, from Burke to Yeats and Henry James, regard as being among the most precious gifts, not of primitive conditions or mere naivety or youth, but of civilization itself. The Virgin Queen Mother, says Adams,

> was the greatest artist, as she was the greatest philosopher and musician and theologist, that ever lived on earth, except her Son, Who, at Chartres, is still an Infant under her guardianship. Her taste was infallible; her sentence eternally final. This church was built for her in this spirit of simple-minded, practical, utilitarian faith—in this singleness of thought, exactly as a little girl sets up a doll-house for her favorite blonde doll.

For Adams, the Virgin is the symbol of the creative, humanizing, civilizing force by which he intends to countervail the Dynamo, the symbol of the vast inhuman forces which history and modern politics and modern science have turned loose in the world.

The idealized women in Henry James's novels are like Adams's Virgin in being at once complicated and simple. In *The Ambassadors,* Lambert Strether, who resembles Henry Adams as much as the Howells he is usually identified with, is surprised to find that Mme. De Vionnet has "fineness" and "subtlety" and all the infinite variety of "Cleopatra in the play" but that this is "without detriment to her simplicity." Mme. De Vionnet is made in this novel to symbolize the high point of culture, and in his *Notebook* James says she has led Strether, the educable American, to "revise and imaginatively reconstruct, morally reconsider, so to speak, civilization." It would simplify matters too much to say that Mme. De Vionnet has led Strether from liberalism to conservatism, but this is certainly a part of what has happened to him.

Strether's last interview with Mme. De Vionnet, which James says is the climax of the novel, involves this author's most famous symbol of the imagination. For as Strether is walking through the streets of Paris toward the fateful interview, we are reminded, by some of the metaphors employed and by the moral meaning of the scene, of James's "dream of the Louvre," the dream which James recounts in *A Small Boy and Others,*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and which his biographers tell us is of cardinal importance in understanding the essential quality of his imagination. It is a dream of chivalric counterattack. The dreamer is disturbed from his sleep by his sense of a nameless and threatening monster trying to get in at the door. He bars the door against the demon and then with "straight aggression" and "dire intention" he turns the tables and pursues the nameless enemy down a corridor, which turns out to be the Galérie d'Apollon in the Louvre. And the Galérie, James explains, breathes for him "a general sense of *glory*. The glory meant ever so many things at once, not only beauty and art and supreme design, but history and fame and power, the world in fine raised to the richest and noblest expression." The moral imagination, by which we imaginatively reconstruct civilization, shows us not only the glory of civilization but its cost, and so leads us to reflect on the danger of needlessly changing it. With an art-consciousness more pure, and more impoverished, than that of James, Wallace Stevens symbolizes the imagination as a "noble rider"—the unifying "violence within," as he calls it in his best-known essay, which rides forth to oppose the "violence without"—the violence, that is, of the modern moral chaos.

MOVING as this poetry of conservatism is, its irrelevance to living political ideas and realities is plain. There is no conservative "position" or philosophy to be found in the writings of James or Adams or Stevens. Adams, the only one of the three with the sort of intellectual equipment that might have led him to construct a philosophy of conservatism, did not do so. He described himself with cryptic irony as a "conservative Christian anarchist" and derived from the contradictions of American life only a despairing poetry of "forces."

The ever-shifting upper middle class which for a time projects an image of itself as an aristocracy before it is subverted and displaced by a new class is a major source of the conservative impulse in American literature. But it does not directly affect large numbers of people. The regional impulse, however, is a more common phenomenon, and a great many of our writers have expressed it.

Regionalism may be defined briefly as that sort of literature which depicts in detail a rural region or a small town and presents it as an image of a simple and on the whole admirable way of life. It is absurd to say that any work which deals with a region is regional, since all works—all prose fiction, at least—do this. Also the category will be badly blurred if we include, as some literary historians do, books like Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio,* Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street,* or Farrell's *Studs Lonigan.* These treat of regions but they do so unfavorably, showing them to be local cultures where human beings are warped, stunted, or demoralized. In America, regionalism has thus been mostly a form of agrarianism, although without the social ideology one associates with agrarianism—whether the Populist ideology of the Western farmers or the Burkean ideology of the "Southern Agrarians," among whom writers like John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren were once to be found.

Historically, the term "regionalism" is generally made to apply to a group of mostly undistinguished writers who began to write stories about their native locales soon after the Civil War. There were Mrs. Stowe, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and later Sarah Orne Jewett, with their pictures of back-country New England. There were Mary Murfree with her Tennessee mountains, Kate Chopin and George Washington Cable with their New Orleans stories, Joel Chandler Harris with his scenes from Negro life, and T. N. Page with his Virginia scenes. There were Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller in the West. Later writers too might be legitimately called regionalists—for example, Willa Cather, Robert Frost, and, in one of his many aspects, Faulkner.

The characteristic style of these writers is realistic genre painting touched with romance and elegy. Whenever there is a moral

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is to the effect that a valuable simplicity, a valuable piety toward the land and toward life is being lost in the march of history. The regional literature suited the conservative mood and the newly arisen local self-consciousness that followed the Civil War. The regionalists felt that the grand, abstract idea of the Union now having been made firm, they could with profit explore the native variations within the national life. In its moral meaning, regionalism was a reaction against the social disruption brought about by the rapid changes of the Gilded Age. It was an implied, and sometimes an explicit, protest against "bigness," against that standardization and uniformity which have always been an alarming aspect of democracy but which between 1870 and 1890 were assuming, at an accelerated rate, their formidable modern characteristics. In its defense of the local and of the vanishing agrarian way of life, it not only looked forward to Willa Cather and Frost but backward to Cooper and to Wordsworth and even to Virgil.

THE typical mood of the regionalists is expressed by Willa Cather in her Nebraska novels. For example, there is the passage in *A Lost Lady* where Ivy Peters, a petty commercial type, drains the marsh that he has acquired along with the estate of the aristocratic Forresters. He does this not only because he wants to grow wheat but out of vengeance and a sheer hatred of natural beauty. His crimes elicit a glowing elegy from Miss Cather on the "courteous brotherhood" of "dreamers" and "great-hearted adventurers" who, "unpractical to the point of magnificence," had originally settled the West. These magnificent adventurers are not, to be sure, the only stimuli of Miss Cather's nostalgia. More important is the image of culture that occurs in various locales in her books—a pioneer culture, morally severe, isolated, an artisan-agrarian culture the style of which is bare, simple, stoic, intensely symbolic of man's closeness to nature and God. It is an organic culture in which the intellectual life, if it exists, is suffused and modified by the simplest, most conservative instincts of man.

Willa Cather, not content like her early master Henry James with the imagination of conservatism, wrote in her later years as a convinced and principled conservative. And there can be no doubt that her announced views, compared with the impulsive and elegiac emotions of her early novels, were dull and unconvincing and that they cut her off, as she herself said, from every new movement of thought and literature after 1922.

William Faulkner, so far as I know, has never declared himself a conservative. But his novels and tales are an eloquent testimonial to the power of his longing for an earlier, agrarian, unsullied America before the Snopeses—carpetbaggers, petty commercialists, and brothers to Willa Cather's Ivy Peters—blighted the country. But on the basis of this nostalgia, which, speaking broadly, is much like that of Cooper, Thoreau, Mark Twain, and Hemingway among many others, several contemporary critics think of him as a principled conservative. My difference from these critics can be stated succinctly. They think that Faulkner is a tragic writer who gives us, as tragedy does, great images of harmony and centrality wherein contradictions such as that between impulse and idea are reconciled. They think that his imagination is most deeply moved by the idea of a traditional, organic culture. It seems to me that Faulkner is not a tragic writer but a melodramatist—that is, one who envisions human life as consisting in starkly irreconcilable contradictions. It seems to me that he is a skeptic and humorist, and that although he is respectful to the myth of an ante-bellum aristocratic Southern culture, he never seriously propounds it as an ideal.

Cleanth Brooks's essay on Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* (*Sewanee Review*, Autumn 1951) says many illuminating things about a difficult novel. But I do not agree that *Absalom! Absalom!* is a tragedy with a vision of harmony and centrality; it is a melodrama akin to *Moby Dick*. The Ahab of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the novel is Thomas Sutpen who comes to Yoknapatawpha County about 1820. Sutpen is a man of tremendous obsessive vitality and will power, and with his wild crew of African savages he carves out of the wilderness a great mansion and plantation. But finally, because of dissension in his family involving a clash of races, and because of the war, Sutpen's grand design fails. His attempt to found a dynasty is abortive, the whole enterprise is a disaster, and Sutpen is left with his baffled question: "Where did I go wrong?"

Brooks, taking a "Southern" point of view, says that Sutpen failed because he behaved like a Yankee. That is, he is all will, pride, and calculating intellect, and thinks tradition and justice are merely abstract coins, negotiable like any other. His "sensibility is dissociated." He tries to appropriate everything abstractly. He has no sense of the emotional, the human price of things. He has no commitment to history, tradition, family, or community, or to his own passional self, which he exploits as readily as anything else. Sutpen is fatally innocent because he does not perceive the incongruity between the rigid simplicity of his "design" and the complexity of the human and natural world upon which he tries to impose it.

So far so good. Yet as I read the novel, we have here another example of what might roughly be called, to give it the proper historical derivation, an American or perhaps Puritan drama of the mind—a study of the isolation which results from obsessively backing a misconceived theory or design and driving it through to the catastrophe.

The proper parallel to draw for Sutpen would therefore be Captain Ahab rather than, as Brooks says, Oedipus or Macbeth. Neither Oedipus nor Macbeth is a monomaniac. They merely want to be as rationalistic and common-sensical as possible. The design of their lives is not something they try to impose; it is something gradually revealed to them out of their unconscious desires and the tragic circumstances of their lives.

Let us admit that the conservative ideal of the community, of tradition, of the tragic sense of life has been more fully developed in the South than anywhere else in the country, and that this affects at least the tone of *Absalom! Absalom!* Still, Brooks is unable to find in Faulkner's novel any community to speak of, or any powerful images of tradition, or acts of tragic stature. As in *Moby Dick,* the forces that oppose the spectacular folly of the hero are pitifully incommensurate.

Brooks's essay on *The Sound and the Fury* is also very much worth reading (see *English Institute Essays,* 1952). Here he says that "Faulkner is a conservative writer." According to Brooks, Faulkner believes in a traditional community of which the family and the woman are the basic constituents. It is true that no writer can give us a full idea of the human condition, let alone a tragic or religious idea of society, unless he can depict convincingly real women of sexual age—as do Shakespeare, Molière, Henry Adams, or Henry James. This is not the occasion to discuss Faulkner's women. But the fact is that he has only two or three interesting ones who are not either brittle flappers, effete aristocrats, moon goddesses, or old maids—Dilsey and Mrs. Bundren and Ruby Lamar. Faulkner succumbs as easily to the sub-civilized folk demonology of woman as do Cooper, Melville, Mark Twain, and Hemingway. Like these writers, Faulkner is the bard of the masculine life. His attitude toward women, like his attitude toward culture, is usually one of suspicion, mockery, caricature, and even vindictiveness.

Why try to remove, as Brooks does, the vital contradictions of Faulkner's mind? If Faulkner is in some of his impulses a conservative, he is also an anarchist; if he is traditional, he is also a modernist. If there is one Faulkner who admires a traditional aristocratic community guided by received, public values, there is another Faulkner who sees no good but in a life on the utmost margins of a society which you have repudiated in order to live by the purely per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sonal virtues of renunciation, the skill of your calling, humor, and a sort of stoic contemplativeness.

The fundamental purpose of conservatism must always be to remove, to reconcile, or to gloss over contraries and polarities. For such oppositions, whether in institutional and political life or in our minds, are the perennial source of unrest and change. The opposition we have had before us, in these pages, is the one between impulse and idea, which is to say, in American culture: conservative impulse and radical idea. Naturally programmatic conservatism looks to literature for a reconciliation of impulse and idea, since literature could hardly exist without an interpenetration of the one by the other.

But what lesson is to be drawn from this fact? None except an aesthetic one. It does not follow, because literature has its peculiar ways of fusing emotion with thought, that this fusion is an ideal to be achieved everywhere or anywhere in the general life of the mind and of culture. This mistake is made by T. S. Eliot and his followers, when they extend his famous phrase, "the dissociation of sensibility," from a criticism of faulty poetry to a general criticism of modern culture. Certain valuable literary effects depend on a fusion of thought and emotion. Others, common in American literature, depend positively on Eliot's bugbear, the dissociated sensibility. And so does a free dialectic of mind and culture.

The interpenetration of impulse and idea is, as I say, native to American literature, as to any other. But in comparing and evaluating different literatures, the question is where, after all, does the essential quality of a literature rest—in the final reconciliation of these contraries or in a sustained tension between them. In much of the most characteristic American writing, impulse and idea are forced far apart into a radical opposition. Often character is defined by the very alienation of intellect and will from emotion —witness the archetypal Captain Ahab. The life of the best American novels and poems depends on an imagination that is contradictory, unstable, disruptive, fragmentary, and extreme—a fact which defines both the marked successes and the peculiar shortcomings of our literature.

In preserving a vivid distinction between conservative impulse and radical idea, American writers—Melville, Hawthorne, and Faulkner no less than Emerson and Whitman—disqualify themselves as conservatives. In the essentials of their art they both mirror and reassert a secular, skeptical, democratic world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

A SUBURBAN NOTE

The Salesmen

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

IN MARCH, the forsythia buds swell and the ice in our unpaved driveway turns to mud that tugs at the soles of our shoes. Swarms of tiny black bugs appear whenever the sun comes out, and the salesmen arrive. They bring paint and vacuum cleaners, insurance for this world and the next; samples of cosmetics and kitchen utensils; and bushels of last year's apples, rotten on bottom, firm and polished on top.

The first to come after the winter hibernation was a blond young man, bent under the weight of a vacuum cleaner. He stood in my doorway with the rain dripping from his hair and the heavy box of attachments dragging him down on one side. I didn't have the heart to send him away. The living-room rug was sprinkled with cracker crumbs. I thought I had nothing to lose but a few minutes of a gray day.

I gasped when he turned a bag of cork shavings on to the floor. He cleaned it up efficiently, however, and left a light colored square to show what might be done.

"You have a bad sand and dust condition here," he said, like a doctor urging an operation. "This is what you permit your children to breathe," and he showed me the contents of his dust bag.

He made it plain that only a calloused mother and inept housekeeper would live with an outmoded cleaner. I found myself admitting that my cleaner was ten years old and even agreed to discuss the matter with my husband.

"I'm sure he wants the best for you and the children," he said. "The offer is just for today. Why discuss it? Why put it off?"

The company was offering a new suit of clothes and a trip to Miami to the young man who sold the most the fastest. "This sale means an awful lot to me," he said.

I had to tell him the truth. I did not plan to buy a vacuum cleaner. I did not care whether or not he went to Miami. Did he care whether I went to Miami?

He swore softly as he gathered his hoses and brushes. He had no use for people who weren't serious. I had wasted his time and lessened his chances to win the contest.

The rain turned to sleet that day and icy roads protected me from the outside world. But several days later, as soon as the sun came out, two women came to my door. One was middle-aged and stout; the other a young girl with a pony tail tied in a pink ribbon. She smiled as she spoke. "We come to bring you word of the true religion."

The older woman shook her head in agreement. "People have fallen into bad ways. We live in a corrupt world," she said, and I could not disagree.

"It's like in Noah's time," the young girl said. "God saw the earth and it was ruined. All flesh ruined its way on the earth."

My daughter hugged my knees and shared my uneasiness. "What does she say?" Nancy asked.

"It's in the Bible, deary," the older woman assured her. "God's word is all in the Bible."

"I'm sorry," I said. The baby rattled his crib impatiently.

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD lives in Sharon, Massachusetts. Her short stories have been a regular feature of COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"For your good and the good of your little children," the girl begged. "The time is at hand for Jehovah to bring his punishment upon us all. Terrible destruction awaits us." Her voice trembled. I thought I saw tears in her eyes. "True religion brings great blessings and love," she said desperately, pressing some pamphlets into my hand. "A little gift," she said. "Only ten cents for this little gift."

I took a dime from the change the milkman had left and gave it to her.

"God bless you and teach you repentance," the older woman said as they turned to go.

"Tell me," Nancy pleaded, "tell me what they were selling you?"

ON FRIDAY, the paint salesman came. The children were playing in the sand box. I was typing at my desk near the window while I watched them. It was the first quiet moment of the day and I was not happy to see a car in the driveway. A heavy young man in a leather jacket pulled a briefcase out of the back seat. He came up to the front door with a confident smile and waved when he saw me at the window.

"I would like just ten minutes of your time," he said cheerfully.

"I'm sorry," I said, "I'm busy now."

"Come on," he urged. "I'm here to do you a favor. What can you lose?"

"My place," I said angrily.

"What are you doing, writing a book?"

"Yes," I said sharply.

"You're kidding," he laughed. "Look, when I decide to do someone a favor, I do it. So relax. I'm not selling anything. I just want to offer you a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I don't have to tell you that your house needs paint." He scraped his fingernail along a shingle and the blistered paint flaked off. "Your friends and neighbors must have told you already. It's just your luck that we have a special this month. We just finished the Cory house down the road and they gave us your name. Now if you take advantage of our offer Cory gets twenty-five dollars off his bill. Now I'll be happy to give you the same amount for every person you recommend. You recommend fifteen people, you get your job done for free."

"We're not painting the outside this year," I said firmly.

"Why not? Give me a good reason why not?"

"I don't have to give you any reason," I said angrily. "We'll paint when we're good and ready and we'll do it ourselves. You're just wasting your time."

"It won't cost you a cent," he said. "I put it on your mortgage and you don't lay out a penny. Let me show you a sample of the work we do. You could never do it! You'll paint this house yourself? What are you talking? It's impossible!"

He did not look at me, but stared rudely at the dining room behind me. The table was set for a Friday night supper. There were candles and a braided *challeh* on the white tablecloth.

"Isn't this nice. I haven't seen this since my old grandmother died. How nice you keep it up! I really like this kind of thing, I really do. I'll tell you something. I'll take off fifty dollars for being you're in the family. What do you say? Do yourself a favor!"

I couldn't get rid of him until the baby fell and cut his lip on his pail. "Where's your doctor?" he asked solicitously. "I'll give you a lift."

"Will you please go?" I found myself screeching. "Just go!"

IN THE course of two weeks I resisted a photographer, a tree nurseryman, and people wanting me to subscribe to magazines I had no time to read. But all my experience could not prepare me for Mr. Stern.

He came out on a Sunday morning when I was trying to turn a day that was neither Sabbath nor Monday to some account. I imagined that I could hurry spring by painting kitchen cabinets. The children squatted at my heels. My husband helped without enthusiasm.

"Not company," I groaned when I heard the doorbell. Dishes and cans were piled on the living-room couch. The children had turned the kitchen furniture into a train.

I knew in a moment that the visitor was a stranger. Our friends did not wear gray felt hats.

He asked for me and I assured him that I was myself.

"I pictured you older," he said thoughtfully. "My wife and I love your stories. They have a mature point of view, an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

understanding of life. I've wished a long time for the opportunity to tell you."

A flush of embarrassment and pleasure went from my cheeks to the back of my neck. I found myself staring down at my green-speckled dungarees, one leg rolled to my knee, the other slipped to my ankle.

"We're painting now, but won't you come in?" I said as I turned to take a pile of dishes off a chair.

"There aren't many people I can drop in on like this," he said. "You can only do this with a mature person, who takes life seriously. . . . Is your husband in. I would like to meet him too."

It was then that I first noticed the leather briefcase. Nancy ran to get her father.

Mr. Stern stood up to shake hands, but withdrew from the green fingers. "I'm sorry to interrupt your work, but I was passing by and I had to speak to you and your wife. We're expanding every day and prices are going up. It would not be wise to delay."

"I don't understand," I said. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"I'm sorry," he said. "I thought I mentioned that I am on the staff of the Hillside Memorial Park."

I still looked blank until my husband said, "You mean the cemetery?"

"You mean you're trying to sell us a plot in the cemetery?" I said.

"I'd like you to think of it as insurance, as an investment in the future. It's protection for you and your children and a chance to get the most for your money. That's exactly the proposition I want to offer you."

I took a deep breath. "We're painting this morning," I said tightly. "Why don't you come back in about twenty years?"

"I'm glad that your wife has a sense of humor," he said. "But in all seriousness, if you wait for an emergency, a plot can set you back as much as five hundred dollars. If you buy now you can get two for that money."

He was ready, pencil in hand. "How many children do you have?"

I shook my head mutely.

"I have a site on the hill," he said. "The view is breathtaking. It's right beside the chapel where memorial services are held, which is a real convenience. I can show you on this diagram that it's a perfect location, right on the path. The inside plots are not as desirable because you can't go right up to them."

The baby crept in quietly and knocked his leather case over. "No!" he shouted, so sharply that we all jumped.

"I'm not interested," I said.

"You can't ignore it, my dear," he said. "The five hundred dollars you save by purchasing now can go toward a child's college education."

Stevie sat under the dining-room table sucking his thumb, looking with yearning at the hat on the mantel.

"It's not only the money, it's the aggravation. Why not protect yourself from a difficult decision at a time when it's hard to make decisions? I offer you here the most beautiful, the most dignified cemetery in New England. You'll never be ashamed of it. It's the best, the very best that money can buy."

He spread his glossy photographs out on the floor. Some looked like a well-tended golf course; others like a botanical garden. There were fish ponds and weeping willows, formal flower borders. Outside my window was a bumpy lawn, bounded by a tangle of blackberry brambles, goldenrod, and sumac.

The only cemetery I had ever seen was the one in which my grandparents were buried. It was a poor man's place, stone against stone, treeless, as crowded and ugly as the tenement in which they had lived. The ivy we brought each year grew reluctantly, looking like the sweet-potato vines that once trailed around my grandmother's kitchen.

"It's too fancy and too expensive," I said, while my husband studied the photographs. "We bought two acres of land for five hundred dollars. Why should a tiny little plot cost that much?"

"You would look for a bargain?" he asked, as if I had hurt him deeply. "You are thinking of the place where your great-grandchildren will come to pay their respects. You *owe* them a spot that is dignified, convenient, and refined. This is a memorial garden, insured perpetual care by a trust fund. It's a democratic cemetery, no difference between rich and poor. What more could you want? You pay it out in monthly installments and you won't miss the money."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He gathered his pictures and papers together. "I'll give you a week to consider the special offer. Five hundred dollars for two, twelve-fifty for six, which not only saves you money but is the only way to keep a family united in a fine type of family estate. Think about it. I'll be back."

There was something ridiculous about this lugubrious little man in a dark suit and hat and carrying a briefcase full of contracts for final resting places. We laughed hysterically as he maneuvered his car in our narrow driveway.

I returned to the kitchen cabinets and the drying paint, determined to forget Mr. Stern, but my husband, whose vanity had not been wounded, could think of practical considerations.

"What if something happened to me at work? What if we were both in a car accident? Explosions, plane crashes, fires—anything can happen!"

"I'm responsible for so many things," I argued. "I don't want to worry for my great-grandchildren and I'm not so serious and mature that it's time to bury me. We could buy a rug for the money, or a new vacuum cleaner. We could have the house painted instead of doing it inch by inch ourselves."

THE vacuum cleaner and paint salesmen did not come back, but Mr. Stern appeared week after week, a mortal angel of death in a dark gray hat. First he came to see if we had made up our minds. Then he came to tell us that prices were *really* going up. The third time he came to announce that two of our best friends had bought their plots from him and we could arrange to have congenial neighbors in the house of eternity.

I refused to speak with him. My husband hurried out to the steps to assure him that we had not been waiting anxiously for his arrival. The fourth time, however, I was not at home and Mr. Stern followed my husband around as he raked the debris of winter out of the gardens. He insisted that it was protection for me, an impractical and unstable woman; it was a favor to the baby playing in the sandbox; it was a man's duty to look out for his family.

My war with Mr. Stern was lost that morning. A letter of congratulations was in our mail on Monday. We were prepared for anything the future could bring. I was too angry to read the details.

A subdued Mr. Stern paid a final visit two weeks later. "I want you to see it with your own eyes. I don't feel it's right to take your money without you seeing what you get for it. All I want is you should be satisfied."

He drove us to the cemetery, past the gates, through the lavish gardens, the rolling lawns, past the fish pond and the formal arrangements of cedar, cyprus, and arbor vitae. When the road ended, Mr. Stern led the way on foot.

"You can't expect much for such a small investment," he said. "It may take five or ten years before the landscapers get to this section. It was your idea, sir, and if it's what you want, you're welcome to it."

Our "estate" for two was in uncleared woodland, a tangle of thorns and young trees sprung up since last year's fire and hurricane.

"It looks like our back yard," Nancy said.

Mr. Stern pulled burrs off his coat. "Are you really sure that this is what you want? I can still change it."

I picked the baby up out of the path of the poison ivy. "It's fine," I assured him. "It's just as ready as we are."

A few minutes later we were home again. Mr. Stern shook hands with us.

"The service and the contract are the same whether you pay a hundred or a thousand. Once they clear the area it will be as beautiful as the rest of the park. It's just a question of time. I wish you a good life, free from sorrow, and I want you to know that I am your personal memorial counselor, ready to serve you in any way, at any time."

He gave my hand an extra squeeze. "I hope we'll be reading something of yours soon. My wife is a very literary person and has so many ideas. It's a pity that she doesn't have the time to write them down, but she was just saying this morning that if you ever need some ideas, she would be happy to talk with you and share some of her experiences."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CEDARS OF LEBANON

LETTER TO A YIDDISH DRAMATIST

Simeon Strunsky to Jacob Gordin

JACOB GORDIN (1853-1909) was the most renowned of all the writers for the Yiddish stage, yet his career as a playwright began only after he had come to this country from his native Russia, at the age of thirty-eight. He started out by adapting for the Yiddish stage works by such dramatists as Lessing, Gorki, Tolstoy, Hauptmann, and Strindberg, and then proceeded to write plays of his own, among which were the *Yiddishe King Lear* and *Gott, Mensh, und Taivl*. His fame spread to the non-Yiddish-speaking world, and, as we see from the letter by Simeon Strunsky (1879-1948) which we print below, efforts were made, all inconclusive, to get Gordin produced on the English-speaking stage.

Strunsky himself was born in Russia but was brought up and educated in this country. It was after the time of this letter, when he was employed by a publisher, that he won fame as a journalist on the New York *Evening Post*, and then as an essayist with the New York *Times*.

Gordin's letter to Mr. Wagnalls of Funk and Wagnalls, who were then engaged in the publication of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, was written in reply to a request for his views on the theater. It seems to have been written originally in Russian—the language Gordin was even more at home in than Yiddish—and then translated.

Both letters are reprinted here by permission of the Yiddish Scientific Institute, and originally appeared in Volume IX (1954) of the *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, together with letters to Gordin from the American poet Edwin Markham, from Markham's secretary, and from S. Zinberg, the editor of the Russian *Jewish Encyclopedia*. The introductory note and annotations to this chapter of letters were provided by Dr. Jacob Shatzky, a member of Yivo.—ED.

DEAR MR. GORDIN:

May I venture to take up some minutes of your time on a subject which will probably task your patience as well? In varying degree the subject has been in my thoughts since I first made your acquaintance more than two years ago; it began to take definite form after the presentation of your *Benefactors of the East Side** at the Grand Central Palace; the immediate occasion of my writing is the special production, at which I was present, of your *Gott, Mensch und Teuffel* at the Thalia on Friday last. I have not the least data for supposing that you have ever thought of writing for the English stage save the above-mentioned production of the *Benefactors;* yet the fact that you have been at pains to invite the attention of the non-Jewish world to your dramatic work makes me inclined to believe that the thought has probably entered your mind. If my supposition is wrong the remainder of this letter is futile; if, on the contrary, you ever have entertained such a desire my first point is made.

You may or may not know that on some occasions, in the course of private conversation, I have spoken in a spirit of criticism of some of your work (not of course that that will or should make any difference to you). You may or may not know, too, however, that I regard you as one of the most excellent of contemporary writers for the stage, with a mastery of the craft which I have seen equalled only in some of Pinero's plays and those of the Germans; and that I have sincerely believed that, were it in any

*There is no mention of such a play in Gordin's bibliographical list which is found in the Yivo archives. It was most probably a one-act play.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way possible for the extra-ghetto world to see your art embodied in a medium entirely comprehensible to them, you could not fail to take rank as America's leading dramatist. Mind, I do not overlook the serious question as to whether your skill, working in a foreign medium, could produce such results as *Mirele Efroth;* that, however, is for you to feel and decide. Taking it for granted that the thing is possible, I have often felt how pale, thin, and tawdry the very best things we now have on the stage, the Fitch, Carton, Sidney Grundy society play,* would range beside a play of real life, written in earnest and with your mastery of technique. This long introduction, then, sums up in this: if you have ever thought of putting a play of yours on the American boards, will you make use of my services for that purpose?

(1) As translator. So many plays have been englished from the European languages that, on the face of it, there is no apparent reason why we may not have an English translation from the Yiddish of Jacob Gordin. Translation, of course, in the case of plays, there is no need to tell you, must mean, often, adaptation. As I think of them now, only plays dealing with the high society, which to a very large extent is the same in all countries, have escaped change in translation. Plays dealing with particularized national characteristics, as your best plays invariably do, to me seem largely untranslatable. Take your *Gott, Mensch und Teuffel* on Friday last. To how many of your foreign spectators did the play bear—I will not say a full meaning—but even, a just meaning? Say that the whole play had been translated for them how far could they have gone towards comprehending a character like "Lazar" or even much of the psychology of "Hershele"? Undeniably some of the richest points in the play must in any case be lost to a non-Jewish audience. In this I believe you will agree with me for the very reason that the themes of your plays are confessedly borrowed from the great secular literatures (*Der jüdische Lear, Faust, Sappho, etc.*) while it is upon the detailed realization of the leading motive in Jewish life and character that you concentrate your efforts. For these reasons it has seemed to me that translating one of your plays would be impracticable unless *the play was written for the very purpose of being translated.* If, therefore, you put aside the question of translating a Yiddish play of yours, might not I help you?

(2) As collaborator. You will probably smile at the term, and, I confess, there is not a little that is ridiculous in my proposing such a co-partnership to you—I who have done nothing at all in this field, to you, the successful master of the stage for more than ten years. Let me, nevertheless, state my arguments.

SHOULD you decide to make an appeal to the American public, the subject that seems inevitably logical for you to treat is the Jew in America. Him, unlike the Jew in Russia, the Gentiles know and, to that extent, of course, your audience is prepared for you. You cannot, however, I believe, take a theme dealing exclusively with the Jew of the ghetto because in him the outside world is not sufficiently interested and him they do not sufficiently know . . . a play exclusively of the East Side, would, in my opinion, still be a foreign play. On the other hand a play that should deal with the Jew as a whole, uptown as well as down, and the relations between the two, would be quite general enough. The subject, then, quite naturally suggests itself; the very subject you have treated—the *Benefactors of the East Side.* Of course, you have only my word for it, but the theme is one over which I had been puzzling a good long time before the production of your sketch and, perhaps, therefore, I may venture to point out in what way the little play struck me as unsuitable for the English stage if, indeed, you ever intended it for such a purpose. You have not invited my criticisms and they may possibly strike you as impertinent; but let me assure you that I enter upon them only because they are closely relevant to the matter in hand. I may say briefly: the play was too fierce, too farcical, and poorly translated. I am quite aware that it was just what you intended to make it, but my point is, that, being what it was, it would not be received by an American audience. It is quite evident that if you are to appeal to the general public you will have to make concessions;

*References are to Clyde William Fitch, Richard Claude Carton, and Sydney Grundy. All three had had their plays produced on Broadway.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and I am fully aware what that means. You are a radical in religion and social theory and you have given a deeply ethical tinge to your works for the stage; perhaps you may not think it worth while, nay, even wrong to "appeal" to the American public; reasoning that everything which appealed to them would probably be to your intense dislike. And yet you, surely, as an artist, cannot deny that your auditor or spectator must be taken into account. May I tell you how I have thought of the very same subject of American Charity, as I have called it, of this subject of the relations between the East Side and the uptown Jew? You have seen one side of the picture: the blatant ignorance, the brutal delay, the ostentation, the silliness of the uptown benefactors. I have seen another side and a kindlier side (and it is in assuming a kindlier attitude that your first concession will have to be made); I have seen young men, classmates of mine at Columbia, Jews, go down on the East Side in the desire to do something for their fellow Jews. I admit that most of their work is useless, and much of it very funny, but, nevertheless, the motive has appealed to me and more than all the indestructible consciousness of race which has seemed to me a beautiful thing and a subject rich in dramatic material. Take this skeleton plot of mine; my hero, the son of a well-to-do uptown Jew, is a fine specimen of the race under favorable conditions; idealistic, clean-minded, clear-headed, a young Daniel Deronda, if you wish, without Deronda's absurd priggishness, and though knowing himself a Jew, quite ignorant of Jewish life on the East Side, Jewish character, Jewish history even—in short, thoroughly Americanized as you call it. There on the East Side he gets his *education;* meets with the multifarious characters of the ghetto, finds out what the Jew is, what his life is, and in him awakens the *national consciousness.* He goes back uptown educated, a convert to Judaism, and a little on the way towards understanding the social problem.

There seems to me in this theme opportunities for an excellent comedy of which Acts I and IV would lie uptown and II and III downtown. An ignorant, money-grabbing father, a vulgar mother, professional charity men, etc. would afford enough scope for satire. The downtown scenes can be made beautiful with realistic portrayal, irony, and pathos. Bring the boy into contact with the types of men he has come down to educate, and will your satire be less effective, for being gentle, when it contrasts the innocent boy with the dreamers, scholars, agitators, thinkers, poets, he has come to save? You will of course have to make other concessions in the form of a pretty love story and all that, but is that not worth while in order to gain a hearing? You catch the point I am trying to make—that, for the sake of your kindliness to some, your American audience will forgive you much bitterness to others. Your satire may be quite effective though by no means so fierce. To sum up, it may mean that in *method* you may have to compromise but in *substance* I can see no concession. On the other hand you would undoubtedly produce a play vibrant with life, with humor, with action. . . .

WHY do you need me? In the first place, of course, for the help I can give you in the English form. You need not be told that translating a play, even where no changes are attempted, is something more than translating a statistical article or even a scientific work. I may be very much conceited but you will probably find very few people on the East Side who will place at your disposal as efficient a command of idiomatic English. I speak from knowledge for I have read much of the work that has been done on the East Side. You might, of course, find literary men among Americans who would work with you but they lack the essential acquaintance with the subject which I can't help possessing. More than the mere work of translating, however, if your play is to deal in part with the uptown Jew, I, as one to whom, if I am not mistaken, you have sometimes referred as Americanized, might help you. As a matter of fact you are quite wrong about that; nevertheless, by temperament, I am able to take a point of view different from yours, as would to some extent be necessary in the construction of any play to please the American public. In addition, there is the acquaintance with American life which, to some degree, I possess. I do not speak here of literary ability. That in me is as yet unproven and you are not bound to take my word for it.

What I expect to derive from such a co-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

partnership is, primarily, the experience. Frankly, if such a thing is possible, I want to learn some of the methods of the art from you. I have no doubt that the work would mean great profit to me. What it may mean to you, you of course will decide. At least I hope you will give the subject some moments of thought and favor me with a reply. Although I have spoken in detail my suggestion is in nature very general—that you make use of me, if you can, for entering the English field. Whatever considerations this may suggest to you, I should be glad to hear. If you should care to have me come to see you I should be only too happy.

Very truly yours,

SIMEON STRUNSKY

DEAR Mr. Wagenhals*:

As to my biography, I refer you to the *New International Encyclopedia,* where quite a correct sketch of my life may be found. Also see *The Spirit of the Ghetto* by Hutchins Hapgood and the *History of Jewish (Yiddish) Literature* by Prof. Leo Wiener of Harvard.

You ask me to trace the origin of the Drama. I can not go into the details of the Genesis.

When Tolstoi published his *Kreutzer Sonata* it exerted a most profound influence upon all intelligent Russians. Those who were in the literary movement felt it all the more keenly. Upon me it produced an indelible impression.

Later I observed cases in the home life of Russians, where the book and its tendencies were vividly reflected in the family relations.

This suggested to me, a play, *identical in the problem* only, to that of Tolstoi's Book.

The name "Kreutzer Sonata" was chosen equally for its attractiveness and its expressiveness.

The treatment evolved as follows: The *racial traditions,* the *family pride,* and the *social conventions,* which are, apparently, the safeguards of family honor, sometimes augment rather than check the development of a deep tragedy and bring about the destruction of the family.

1. *Racial tradition*—In the play, the Jewish father, the patriarch of the family, opposes the marriage of his daughter with a Christian, with a man of another *race.*

2. Family pride has to be presented at any cost, and to it, the parents sacrifice the happiness of their daughter.

3. To hush the scandal and hubbub, the daughter is forced to marry a man from lower social stratum.

First love crushed in the bud, and the consequences of the ill-match, are worked out in the drama. But what enhances the tragedy is the natural effect of immigration. Stranded on foreign soil, the old family traditions become entangled with those of the new and strange land—family happiness is threatened; degeneration and collapse follows.

Thoughts on the Drama

Shakespeare taught us that the Drama should be the mirror of real life and of human nature.

The Drama is not for amusement, merely, but for instruction as well.

The greatest Educational Institution of the world is the theatre.

The theatre sociologizes great ideas, and brings men of widely different social ranks to one intellectual level.

Unquestionably, every drama must include elements of amusement, but its main object should be enlightment.

The *Realism* of a literary work is analytic in portrayal of characters and types of society.

In *ideas* is vested the synthetic power of a work of art.

Therefore, drama must be realistic in portrayal and synthetic in ideas.

A drama without realistic features and definite ideas, no matter how clever, is merely a doll, attractively dressed to amuse children.

There are great Romantic plays but their greatness lies in their synthetic ideas.

Cheap melodramas and "horse" plays have often greatest success, but this only indicates how much more of real solid work the serious drama has yet to accomplish. [Of course, the press agents did not utilize my letter.]

*This should of course have been "Wagnalls."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON THE HORIZON

ORGANIZATION MEN

The Erosion of Individuality

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

IN THE film *Sabrina,* Humphrey Bogart, in the role of a hard-bitten, hard-driving tycoon of the deal-a-minute variety, is asked by his brother, a gay and good-looking but worthless wastrel, why he works so intensely. It can't be for money, is it for power? "Power," growls Bogart as nearly as I can paraphrase the dialogue, "power is a dirty word." And goes back to work.

Power and its organizational cloak is the theme of these three books, *The Art of Success, The Executive Life,* and *The Organization Man,* the first two of which are drawn entirely, and the last in part, from *Fortune.* The nature of business power, the divided attitudes of executives toward authority (some agree with Bogart), the impact of power upon them, and, most important, the effects of business power on society as a whole are four central problems at least glimpsed in these books. Although none pretends to be formal sociology and none, perhaps, is the worse for that fact, each, and Whyte's book especially, touches such sociological problems as bureaucracy, classes, ideology, and factory organization.

A certain unity of approach ties these books together, which is not unexpected in view of their more or less common origin. But this does not mean that the *Fortune* attitude toward power and the organizations which both execute it and conceal its nature is unambiguous. In concluding that it is not, I consciously reject C. Wright Mills's analysis of *Fortune** as a consistent, sure-footed organ of sophisticated conservatism. Mills interpreted *Fortune's* stand in favor of international aid as motivated by a desire to stave off the programs of social and economic reform at home which, in strengthening the power of labor, appeared to threaten the power of business. Even less tenable than the Marxist and Hobsonite echoes in this view is the unity of outlook and the degree of understanding of the problem that it implies on the part of *Fortune's* editors.

My reading of these books and of *Fortune* itself persuades me that the magazine is deeply involved in the problems it discusses and deeply disturbed about their solutions. It too is an organization. Its writers and editors are themselves individuals faced with the need to succeed in a bureaucratic world. If in the end *Fortune* favors organizational necessities against individual claims (and, in my opinion, this conclusion is tenable), its writers are far too good organization men themselves to see organization only or even

---

"ORGANIZATION" and the "organization man" are being much heard of since *Fortune* broached these terms several years ago. And now three books come along all of which represent important efforts to deal with the subject in depth: *The Art of Success,* by the Editors of *Fortune* (Lippincott, 302 pp., $5.00); *The Executive Life,* by the Editors of *Fortune* (Doubleday, 223 pp., $3.50); *The Organization Man,* by William H. Whyte, Jr. (Simon and Schuster, 429 pp., $5.00). ROBERT LEKACHMAN is an associate professor in economics at Barnard College. He was born in 1920 and educated at Columbia. His last previous contribution to this magazine, "Economics for Everybody?" appeared in January 1956.

*See his *New Men of Power.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mainly as an instrument of domination, and they are too addicted to the pragmatic attitudes traditional in our society to develop neat, logical, fully explanatory theories. The men of *Fortune* are uncertain and divided of mind: they are not conspirators.

THE *Art of Success* is a series of profiles of highly successful businessmen, some like the Rockefeller brothers the beneficiaries of great inheritances, others like Clint Murchison, the Texas oilman, born with a golden touch and a green thumb, still others like Harlow Curtice adept enough in the arts of the great corporation to attain a salary of $750,000. As Horatio Alger and Samuel Smiles among many others proved, money and success are usually intriguing subjects. Why then are these profiles so dull that it is a genuine struggle to avoid mixing up two lives only a few minutes after reading them?

The answer lies partly in the nature of the individuals dealt with and partly in the nature of the book. Not financial necessity, but free choice, or perhaps neurotic compulsion, makes these men work. In the trite phrase, they live for their work. In their single-minded absorption, they read few books, listen to no music, and inspect no pictures. In some instances, they discovered their talents as boys and either dispensed with advanced education or bent it to their own ends. "Useless" knowledge is the proper goal of the liberal-arts curriculum: the capacity to lead a rich mental life is more prized than the ability to make many dollars. But everything that these men did and do is at least *useful* to themselves. Such an outlook can make men formidable but seldom interesting; variety inheres not in them but in the operations they control. Other people's business can fascinate us when it happens to be our business too, or careful, patient exposition convinces us for the time being that we are involved enough almost to be in the business. But these sketches are too short really to differentiate one business from another any more than they differentiate one man from another.

Which brings us to the form of these essays. They are written in Luce style. That is to say the sentences are short, though not necessarily grammatical; colorful adjectives and incidents more or less judiciously flavor each account; and, toward these businessmen, the tone falls just short of reverence. The trouble with conscientiously colorful writing is that it rapidly palls. After a rain of "venerables," "redoubtables," "superbs," "uncannys," and similar exclamations (and these at least are good English words in contrast to "wheeler-dealers" and "real estate hotshots"), the reader is left inert. And the anecdotes, even when they are new to the reader, have a flavor that is as musty as though they had already been told thousands of times in hundreds of clubs in dozens of cities. Much too much in this book is the work of the conscientious confectioner who blends his ingredients to suit a market.

On the whole, the *Art of Success* deals with executives who prefer an older style of corporate control. They are men who tend to work alone with a minimum of formal organization, and that minimum held close beneath the thumb. Trusting their own judgment, they defer little to committees and willingly claim as their own the fruits of their own astuteness. So conspicuous an apparent exception as Harlow Curtice manages to retain in his own hands far more authority than the formal organizational structure of General Motors appears to imply.

THE *Executive Life* is quite a different kind of book from *The Art of Success*—much more engaging and much more nearly successful because it tells a tale of two conflicts instead of a series of stories of men born to succeed. The first conflict is between the executives who share the attitudes of the heroes of the *Art of Success* and those younger ones who are graduated from leading business schools like Harvard and Wharton. The younger group has been taught a new set of doctrines. Within the organization they see the executive's function as that of winning the cooperation of workers and colleagues. Diffusion of responsibility through committees is preferred to clear lines of authority emanating from the top. The ambition to excel that is perhaps natural to young men must be muted and, in any event, should take the acceptable shape of superior talent in cooperation. The emphasis of the managerial art shifts from the manipulation of things, the care-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ful coordination of technical processes, to the manipulation of people.

The executive's proper behavior toward individuals and groups outside his organization is a simple extension of this doctrine of human relations. The key aim is to win public acceptance and ultimately public support, not only for the organization's product, but also for the organization's personality and ethos. Hence the "institutional" flavor of so much recent business advertising, which, like that of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, puts less emphasis on the product sold than on the benevolence of the seller.

At its best, this desire to win prestige for a business enterprise is the effect, not of a wish to manipulate opinion in the interests of the manipulator, but rather of the sincere belief that cooperation advances the interests of both seller and buyer much as cooperation welds into fruitful harmony employer and employee. These younger executives, almost inevitably subordinate in the executive hierarchy to older men, do their best to convince, convert, and, if need be, circumvent the older executives. And the cold logic of the actuarial table promises them the future.

But even though the younger executives are fated to win out over the older ones, another, more subtle struggle rages within their own breasts whose outcome remains yet uncertain. As this book testifies, most executives when they start out set modest limits to their explicit objectives. Fed upon the fact and folklore of ulcers, coronary attacks, and tranquillizing pills, they seek security in the shape of a job which yields modest income for moderate effort. Evenings and weekends are to be free to spend with families and friends in the full flowering of the domestic and the social affections. The symbol of this kind of ambition is the barbecue pit. But the young partisans of limited liability in life soon encounter obstacles. The simplest is the discrepancy between their conception of a "modest" income and what "modest" incomes can really buy. If David Riesman's illuminating report of an interview with a Princeton senior is as illustrative as it appears to be of the typical attitudes of novice executives, that senior will either enlarge his income objectives well above the stated $15,000, or else lop off those gracious homes, large families, private schools, European trips, and small power boats which now strike him as essential to a moderate scale of living. Under the consumption pressures of our society the chances are he will choose the first alternative—groups considerably larger than the senior class at Princeton do. But it is a choice that means hard work and, worse still, competition with fellow aspirants. Pyramids have the nasty habit of narrowing, their sides seem to grow ever more steep as the air around them thins; but the rewards of successful climbing come to be ever more alluring.

At some point in the climb, moderation vanishes and the not quite so young executive begins to take work home evenings, drop into the office on Saturday to tidy up and to be seen by his superiors, and, despite his vows, neglect his family. Then, truly, he is caught. And it is then, too, that the second, the internal, struggle begins. He has been taught and genuinely believes in the public relations, cooperation, and team play which he preaches. Yet, if he has executive talent, he also has faith in his own judgment, and a healthy attachment to his own ego. Because he knows what is right, he chafes at the time wasted in committee meetings—and chafes all the more because he is convinced that it would be wrong to complain. The old-style executive pounded desks if not subordinates. The new-style executive cannot, and no wholesome substitutes present themselves. *Fortune*, which admires the social arts and the civilized scruples of the new man, cannot repress its nostalgia for old-fashioned individualism. The scruples of the new man mean nervous tension, repressed emotion, and muffled conflict, for he cannot manifest ambition, hostility, or dominance. Is such a frustrating situation stable? Will not these new executives, in a desperate bid for freedom, revert to ancestral type and try to dominate their environment instead of adjust to it? These questions the *Executive Life* leaves open.

THE most ambitious of the three books is W. H. Whyte's *The Organization Man*. It is the only one whose author, a single individual, speaks apparently for himself and not for his periodical. It is a picture of the future, if we assume that the young execu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive described in the *Executive Life* will actually come into his birthright. Nor does Mr. Whyte intend his summary to apply only to businessmen, but also to civil servants, scientists, and teachers—to all occupations where organization and its new ethos have penetrated.

Mr. Whyte's book is an interesting one, full of entertaining stories about the meaning of "belongingness" and "togetherness," about the ways in which organizations hire and shape the personalities of their servants, and about the new suburbia in which that shaping is continued. Moreover, these details have more than anecdotal value: they really illustrate the author's major themes. Mr. Whyte's reading in sociology, industrial organization, and even in the wastelands of the educational journals has been wide. What he concentrates upon is the meaning of the new organization. And his own worries are those of a civilized, humane member, not of an organization, but of society; he is concerned about the substitution of the group for the individual, the growing sameness of life, the increasing conformity of behavior, the declining literacy of readers and writers, about "belongingness" and "groupiness" and the rise of a "social ethic" in place of the Protestant one. On every one of these points Whyte appears to stand with the critics of organization rather than with its defenders. Like a social scientist, he seeks to understand why the false god of diffused responsibility, which is the heart of the social ethic, has supplanted the truer ideal of individual responsibility contained in the Protestant Ethic. And finally, like a moralist, he sees the remedy as lying in change of individual conduct. In intent, this is a serious book by a man little willing to swallow contemporary stereotypes.

But it is a failure. What is wrong is a genuine ambiguity of moral vision that is reflected in the style and the tone of the book, and whose inevitable result is so to weaken its message as to render it meaningless. Two quotations will reveal Mr. Whyte's confusion of values. Here is the first:

> In further institutionalizing the great power of the majority, we are making the individual come to distrust himself. We are giving him a rationalization for the unconscious urging to find an authority that would resolve the burdens of free choice. We are tempting him to reinterpret the group pressures as a release, authority as freedom, and that this quest assumes a moral guise makes it only the more poignant. Of all forms of wanton self-destruction, the Englishman A. A. Bowman once observed, there is none more pathetic than that in which the human individual demands that in the vital relationships of life he be treated not as an individual but as a member of some organization.

Fair enough. If the style lacks elegance or grace, it possesses conviction. But listen to Mr. Whyte's other voice:

> How did he get that way? His elders taught him to be that way. In this chapter I am going to take up the content of his education and argue that a large part of the U. S. educational system is preparing people badly for the organization society—*precisely because it is trying so very hard to do it.* My charge rests on the premise that what the organization man needs most from education is the intellectual armor of the fundamental disciplines. It is indeed an age of group action, of specialization, but this is all the more reason the organization man does not need the emphases of a training "geared for modern man." The pressures of organization life will teach that. But they will not teach him what the schools and the colleges can—some kind of foundation, some sense of where we came from, so that he can judge where he is, and where he is going and why.

The first passage is by a critic of organization who is horrified by its excesses. The second is by an organization man anxious to improve the quality of organization. If Mr. Whyte is both men, he is especially the second. What is that second man like? He is the worst sort of well-meaning practical man. "It is indeed an age of group action," he says. The organization is here; we must accept it. Other values are important too, but in Mr. Whyte's context they turn out to be utilitarian, useful from the organization's special point of view. Thus he tells us that it is a mistake for college students to center their attention on engineering and business administration. It is more *practical* for them to take the fundamental disciplines.

The fatal weakness of this argument is its conversion of ends into means. The best reason to study philosophy and literature is not the ultimate financial value of an acquaintance with them; commercial law and economic geography would promise larger returns. The best reason is the gratification

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they yield to the "instinct of idle curiosity," as Veblen so aptly put it. But Mr. Whyte, following the good organization man's instinct to meet organization on its own ground, discards all those stronger arguments with which he is familiar when he is away from the organization. How do we defend Lamb, Swift, and Shakespeare (the list is Mr. Whyte's)?

> If technicians of "business writing" and the psychologists have been able to denature English into a "communication" science, it is because the greater relevance of English has been left undrawn.
>
> And this in the long run means a less useful English. Who has the most to teach us about any subject? The geniuses—or the also-rans? It is to such as Lamb and Swift and Shakespeare that we should look and not to the prose engineers. The great models of thought and expression can seem far removed from our own immediate problems, but almost for this detachment they are the greatest guide of all. It is the universals, not the particulars, that are important; only through them can we learn that simplicity is the product of thought, rather than the mechanics of chopping the number of sentences per hundred words. It is a long and tough discipline, yet in the long run what is more downright practical?

Moral? Read Shakespeare and learn how to write technical reports.

Am I exaggerating to make my case? I think not. Mr. Whyte tells the story of a series of articles for *Fortune* written by himself and his colleagues on the role of the wives of executives. A lively enough group of articles, they described the growing tendency of management to interview the wives of prospective executives, the social pitfalls in wait for the maladroit wife, and the importance placed on a proper feminine attitude to the advancement of one's husband. What did the authors mean? According to Whyte, they wished only to ridicule practices at best ridiculous and at worst oppressive. What happened? Mr. Whyte tells us:

> Soon articles began to appear in trade journals and the women's pages of newspapers on "the wife problem." Congratulations to *Fortune*, they said, for breaking the ice and showing how wrong was the old hands-off policy. The rules of the game we had paraphrased tongue-in-cheek were reprinted verbatim as psychologically sound guides for peace of mind in corporate life; worse still, the examples of company wife programs we had described were stimulating other companies into devising even more stringently controlled programs.

This horror story is told with regret but also with pride in the large splash produced. Missing is the emotion of shame. The articles were a triumph of ambiguity. Mr. Whyte's friends could read them and laugh with him, and possibly also at all the people who failed to get their point. And who were the latter? None other than the company presidents, vice-presidents, and other executives who were in a position to accept or reject the recommendations of a responsible trade periodical. That is to say: the key group of readers for which *Fortune* is designed. (The magazine is not aimed at the practicing ironists of college English departments.) Has Mr. Whyte escaped responsibility by retrospectively pointing to the tongue stuck in his cheek? I don't think so. What I do think is that he made an ethically comprehensible but also ethically shaky effort to enjoy the best of two worlds. If he had explicitly preached the methods he mocked, the results would have been almost the same.

Another tale Mr. Whyte tells is a moral one addressed to candidates for jobs with those large corporations that subject applicants to personality tests designed to assess their compatibility with the organization. If they memorize the following catechism, Whyte advises them, their scores will be high and their offers many:

> I loved my father and my mother, but my father a little bit more.
> I like things pretty much the way they are.
> I never worry much about anything.
> I don't care for books or music much.
> I love my wife and children.
> I don't let them get in the way of company work.

Your performance will be superlative if you carry with you into the examination room these additional cautions: "Be empathic to the values of the Test maker. Choose your neurosis. Don't be too dominant. Incline to conservatism. Don't split hairs."

Is Mr. Whyte simply joking, merely parodying? Read in isolation, his discussion might just possibly produce this conclusion in a charitable soul. But the sour after-taste

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which his chapter on personality testing, and even more his appendix "How to Cheat on Personality Tests," induce, suggests a good deal more than a moderately entertaining spoof. Once more Mr. Whyte has a message, and it can be fairly summarized in the following terms. The organization ultimately wishes us all well. In any event it is the source of the income which we all want in order to enjoy a sound middle-class standard of living. The organization also demands of its minions a certain kind of personality. It is wrong of the organization to demand this conformity, partly on ethical grounds (is not a man's soul his own?), but most importantly because the conformist is in the end a poor executive. Therefore the intelligent student confronted with a personality test will cheat. With his mentor's trot in his hand, he will give the proper answers *because* he wants the rewards of the organization, and because also he knows better than the organization what is good for the organization.

Do not rebel, Mr. Whyte seems to say; it will cost you money if you enter those few areas of economic endeavor where the organization is not yet overwhelmingly powerful. Rather manipulate your superiors within the organization for their and your own good, as they think they are manipulating you. Manipulate others as you would have them manipulate you, but do it first. In implying all this Whyte accepts the standards of the organization, which exclude the criteria of truth and relevance because they lie outside the context of immediate advantage. Truth becomes sheerly instrumental (the Marxist analogy is inescapable), and in fighting the organization we become indistinguishable from its servants. It makes little difference in such a world whether the student of Whyte bends the organization to his will, or the organization triumphs over the apprentice manipulator. They are birds of a feather.

Once more Mr. Whyte is surprised because some of his readers took him seriously enough to read his article on personality testing, which originally appeared in *Fortune,* as a serious endorsement of personality tests. Why should they not? The moral ambiguity from which the piece suffers is heightened by uncertainties of style. To put the matter kindly, Mr. Whyte's writing is careless. To put it more properly, he lacks feeling alike for the word, the sentence, and the paragraph. To take stray items from what could be an extensive list, he writes phrases or words like "the glamor one"; "as I will take up later"; "contemporaryism"; and "yen." When, therefore, in speaking of the errors and fallacies of the organization mind he writes "concretized," even the sophisticated reader must wonder whether he is satirizing the language of his presumed opponents or whether he means this word in the same good earnest as he means other no less horrible words. Where there is so little precision in language and so much uncertainty of purpose, no reader can be blamed for accepting what he reads at face value.

MR. WHYTE'S book is the clearest expression of *Fortune's* view of the world, and *Fortune* is a force in the making of American business ideology. The *Fortune* view of man in the organization can be summarized in six propositions: (1) Not alone business, but also education, science, publishing, and religion are organized in larger and larger units administered necessarily according to bureaucratic principles. (2) The organization produces a mixture for good and evil like everything else human. The good includes security of tenure, humanity in the treatment of its instruments, and the increasing provision of the important goods and services coveted by most of us. The evil is in the pressure toward conformity and the erosion of individuality. The danger is sameness, the gray flannel personality within the gray flannel suit. (3) The organization tends to seek men who conform to its own image, not because its leaders wish others evil, but only because they conceive that men of this stamp will be happiest in the organization, work best in and for it. (4) The organization is wrong about (3). Progress depends upon originality. The organization which stifles originality within its own ranks fails in the end to achieve its own potential. (5) The wise individual bores from within, actually subverting the organization for the organization's own good, by the secret practice of individualism. (6) The result can only be happier individuals and more productive organizations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A book, not an essay, would be necessary to display the full implications of this view of the world. Some of the most important are also the plainest. Individuals are urged to practice the very techniques of manipulation, indirection, and—to be blunt—untruth which are deplored when practiced by the organization itself. Mr. Whyte's and *Fortune's* attitude toward society reflects the old human tendency to have one's cake and eat it too. Indeed, it erects this tendency into a moral imperative.

Another liability of this view of the world is that it is too ready to swallow commonplaces whole. It has not been demonstrated, for example, that large organizations are always more efficient than small ones. Bureaucracy implies dysfunctions as well as functions, and the advantages of the small organization in flexibility and freedom from red tape are very real. Allied to this illusion is another, the belief in the irreversibility of all present social tendencies. There are anti-bureaucratic as well as pro-bureaucratic tendencies at work in our society. The apparent conversion of the young to the splendors of the large organization may not survive our next severe economic setback. Only organization men believe that organization has outlawed depressions.

Mr. Whyte and his colleagues have done a real service by disclosing some of the reasoning, and some of the confusions in that reasoning, of the more enlightened proponents of the case for organization. But a full critique of organization will never come from its own employees, not because they fear the hand that feeds them, but because they are part of that hand's operations. We must await the best accounts from truly disinterested observers, or from refugees from organization.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STUDY OF MAN

FREUD, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL REALITY

"The Incomprehensible Monster, Man"

WILL HERBERG

FREUD'S impact on the 20th century has been immense, and so far at least incalculable. No field of intellectual or cultural life has been left untouched by the new and radical mode of analysis he initiated. Religion, in particular, has been deeply affected, not only because Freud possessed an interest in religious problems that grew with the years, but also because he was always probing into matters that are of genuine religious concern, such as human nature and destiny, the meaning of life and death, the relation of man to his fellow men in society. Theologians have for some time acknowledged the power and relevance of Freud's thinking for their field of concern. What is it that they have found so significant in the work of this avowed, even militant, atheist? Why is it that they have tended to prefer Freud's views to the more conciliatory attitudes of the post-Freudian revisionists? An attempt to answer these questions may cast light on the elements of enduring value in Freud's wrestling with the basic problems of human life.

FREUD'S contribution still remains to be adequately assessed by our time. Here WILL HERBERG situates the problem in relation to religion, in an article that, in somewhat changed form, will appear in the volume *Freud and the Twentieth Century*, edited by Benjamin Nelson, which Meridian Books will bring out in April. Mr. Herberg is a long-time contributor to COMMENTARY, in which he last appeared with "America's New Religiousness" in September 1955. At present he is Adjunct Professor of Judaic Studies and Social Philosophy at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. He is author of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, published in the fall of 1955.

All of Freud's thinking about human life hinges on a twofold dualism: the dualism of ego and id within the psyche, and the dualism of individual and society within the culture. The two dualisms are not unrelated.

In his mature account of the structure and "topography" of the psyche, Freud repeatedly emphasizes that it is the id, the repository of the deep instinctual drives, which is the dynamic part of the self. It is the "oldest of mental provinces and agencies," it is wholly unconscious, and it supplies the psychic energy for the functioning of the whole organism. Its law is to press for immediate gratification: "instinctual cathexes seeking discharge—that is all that the id contains." The id knows only the pleasure principle, which it obeys "inexorably." Such gratification of instinct is "happiness"; indeed, Freud often speaks as though it were the very purpose of life.* At any rate, it is the primordial law of the organism.

But the immediate satisfaction for which these instincts in the id press might well imperil the entire organism by bringing it into conflict with its environment, natural and social. About this the id knows and cares nothing, since it is governed entirely by the pleasure principle. The survival of the organism requires the functioning of another agency that will restrain and control the id. This agency is the ego, described by Freud as "a special organization which henceforward acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world." The ego is concerned with "keeping down the instinctual claims of the id," but also with "discovering

---

*"The power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life. This consists of the satisfaction of its innate needs" (*An Outline of Psychoanalysis*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the most favorable and least perilous method of obtaining satisfaction, taking the external world into account." It is the ego's task, in short, "to mediate between the pretensions of the id and the preventions of the outer world." To achieve this purpose, the mature ego operates with the reality principle; it is the rational element of the self. In a word, "the ego stands for reason and circumspection, while the id stands for the untamed passions."

The picture becomes even more complicated as we recognize a third agency in the psychic life, the superego, the internalized "successor and representative of the parents and educators," which stands over the ego, out of which it has emerged, as an inward monitor, exercising the powers of "observation, criticism, and prohibition." Assailed by the id, which demands instinctual gratification, and harassed by the superego, which keeps watch and threatens lest its rigid standards be violated, the poor ego must try to promote "reason and sanity" as best it can in order to preserve the organism and see that instinctual gratification takes place in a manner that is not self-destructive.

The conflict taking place, within the depths of the psyche, between the ego and the id is also writ large in the life of society. The ego, remember, is described by Freud as an "intermediary between the id and the external world," while the superego, in whose shadow the ego operates, is characterized as the outcome of a process by which "part of the inhibiting forces of the outer world become internalized." The inner tension between the ego and the id is thus reflected in the tension between the self and the outer world, since the unregulated gratification of instinctual drives would not only disrupt the psyche, but would also make the coexistence of man with man in society impossible.

For Freud, the very possibility of social coherence constitutes a grave problem. He sees human community emerging under the influence of the two great forces Eros and Ananke, love and necessity—the former by giving the male a "motive for keeping the female, or rather, his sexual objects, with him"; the latter by bringing about some sort of cooperation for work. But these forces, Freud feels, would hardly of themselves suffice to sustain society and "domesticate" man, who is basically so anti-social. Something more is necessary if men are to survive. That something is supplied with the emergence of culture or civilization.

Essentially, what Freud means by culture in this connection is the vast and intricate complex of psychological and institutional devices by which society is held together and man converted into a social being. The superstructure of culture is vast and far-reaching, and no one admires the fine flowers of cultural creativity more than Freud; but no one can be more pragmatic, more realistic—more crude, some would say—than he in interpreting its social function.

Culture demands increasing amounts of instinctual renunciation, Freud insists. This is so because, as we have seen, unrestricted and unregulated instinctual expression would make social life impossible; it is so for the even more important reason that cultural creativity requires a considerable amount of psychic energy, to be obtained only by diverting it from its primary instinctual aims, sex and aggression.

Extensive "restrictions on the sexual life" are required if any society at all is to be possible. Moreover, "culture obeys the laws of psychological economic necessity in making the restrictions, for it obtains a great part of the mental energy it needs by subtracting it from sexuality." A good deal of the sexual energy is "sublimated" and transformed into what Freud calls "aim-inhibited libido," which helps "strengthen communities by bonds of friendship." Freud is fascinated by the "law of love," the injunction to love one's neighbor as oneself. This "law" is absurd on all "rational" grounds, he feels—yet necessary for civilization. "Culture has to call up every possible reinforcement," he says. "Hence its system of methods by which mankind is to be driven to identifications and aim-inhibited love relationships; hence the restrictions on sexual life; and hence, too, its ideal command to love one's neighbor as oneself, which is really justified by the fact that nothing is so completely at variance with original human nature as this." Unfortunately, however, Freud acknowledges, such extremities of "aim-inhibited friendliness" as are required by the "law of love" are possible only for a very few. St. Francis is his favorite example.

For, after all, it is man's aggressiveness that is the "most powerful obstacle to culture" and social cooperation. What means does civilization employ to control this self-destructive aggressiveness in man? As with sex, aggression has to be sharply restricted by repression and other devices. As with sex, too, there are carefully regulated and socially sanctioned forms

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of expression. As Gregory Zilboorg points out in *Mind, Medicine, and Man,* "direct violence in a social setting becomes temporarily an ally of both the ego and the superego; the individual participating in an act of violence of a social nature—whether he is a striker, a revolutionist, a soldier, or a policeman—rarely if ever feels guilty about it. . . . The superego lends its full support to the ego in that it justifies the violence on grounds of ethical social principles." In this way a certain amount of aggression can be gratified not only without endangering the position of the ego and social control, but even in a manner that strengthens it.

But the most subtle device by which society protects itself against the disruptive forces of human aggression is the introjection of the latter into the superego. The aggressiveness is turned inward and supplies the stern superego with its power to keep the ego, and through the ego the id, in line. "Civilization," Freud notes with telling effect, "thus obtains mastery over the dangerous love of aggression in individuals by enfeebling and disarming it, and setting up an institution within their minds to keep watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city." The supreme irony of the situation is, of course, that the power by which aggressiveness is controlled is derived from the very aggressiveness itself.

Freud goes even further. In his studies of group psychology he suggests that an essential factor in the cohesion of the group, and in group relations generally, is the projection by all members of the group of their superego onto a single figure, the leader. Where no leader figure emerges as a sort of corporate superego, the culture is enfeebled and confused, Freud feels. This was his criticism of American civilization in the 1920's, where (according to him) "leading personalities failed to acquire the significance that should fall to them in the process of group formation."*

*"This danger [a state one may call *"la misère psychologique"* of groups] is most menacing where the social forces of cohesion consist predominantly of identifications of the individuals in the group with one another, whilst leading personalities fail to acquire the significance that should fall to them in the process of group formation. The state of civilization in America at the present day offers a good opportunity for studying this injurious effect of civilization which we have reason to dread. But I will resist the temptation to enter upon a criticism of American culture. I have no desire to give the impression that I would employ American methods myself" (*Civilization and Its Discontents*).

Culture accomplishes an amazing work, but can it do more than establish a precarious balance that is always threatened from below? Freud points to "the difficulties inherent in the very nature of culture, which," according to him, "will not yield to any efforts at reform." "Every culture," he repeats, "is based on coercion and instinctual renunciation." He therefore warns against the panacea-mongers with their schemes for achieving a perfect adjustment of man and society. "A great part of the struggles of mankind," he says, "center around the single task of finding some expedient . . . solution between . . . individual claims and those of the civilized community; it is one of the problems of man's fate whether this solution can be arrived at in some particular form of culture, or whether the conflict will prove irreconcilable. . . . The fateful question of the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent the cultural process developed in it will succeed in mastering the derangements of communal life caused by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction." On this ominous note Freud ends his remarkable tract, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* upon which I have mainly drawn for this exposition.

WHEN we turn to Erich Fromm, the most influential of the neo-Freudian revisionists, we enter, as it were, a new world. Where Freud is dualistic, Fromm is harmonistic; where Freud is somber, even pessimistic, Fromm exhibits an amazing confidence in the possibilities of human progress; where Freud assumes the posture of a disillusioned observer, Fromm is always the reformer.

To Fromm, man is not divided against himself in the very structure of the psyche, but is essentially unified, intact, perfect. The imperfections and distortions of human nature Fromm traces to the corrupting effects of man's culture.

Fromm today still wavers between his earlier conception that it is "the social process which creates man" (*Escape from Freedom*) and his more recent view that there is a normative human nature which "is the same for man in all ages and all cultures" (*The Sane Society*). But however man is understood, he is seen as essentially good and rational; there is practically no vestige in Fromm of the dark Freudian picture of the primordial struggle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between ego, superego, and id in the depths of the self. All man really wants, according to Fromm, is to "relate himself to the world lovingly . . . [to] use his reason to grasp reality objectively, [to] experience himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time one with his fellow man, [to be] one who is not subject to irrational authority, [but who] accepts willingly the authority of conscience and reason. . . ." That is all man wants to be, but society won't let him, at least society hitherto hasn't let him. The locus of evil and irrationality is thus not in man but in the society. The real conflict, in other words, is between good, healthy human nature on the one side, and a "sick" society on the other.

Viewing man and society from this angle, Fromm sees the real problem not as the taming of the innate destructive drives in man through the devices and institutions of civilization, but as the reconstruction of society to fit normative human nature. Once such reconstruction is achieved—and to Fromm it is well within the realm of human achievement—once society is restored to "sanity," the essential goodness and rationality of human nature will have the opportunity of expressing itself in social life. Sane men in a sane society might be described as Fromm's vision: and men become sane because they have a sane society to live in, a society that will not distort or corrupt their personalities. "Fromm promises the advent of loving, creative, and reasonable man"—Paul Kecskemeti thus acutely summarizes the argument of *The Sane Society* (in "The All-Powerful 'I,'" COMMENTARY, February 1956) —"on condition that society recognizes the sovereignty of the individual. Society can become perfect because human nature already is: the only thing needed is that society no longer dim the light of natural perfection."

It is possible to pay tribute to the brilliance, even profundity, of much of Fromm's criticism of contemporary culture without overlooking the naivety of the panacea he offers for our ills. "The only alternative to the danger of robotism," he says, "is humanistic communitarianism"—by which he means the restructuring of society into small and decentralized communal entities in which the functions of worker and manager will somehow be combined. How, in the face of all experience, Fromm can believe such combination to be really possible, or why he should assume that were it achieved there would be nothing in life but love, rationality, and creativeness, is far from clear. But Fromm's basic notion of man and society is clear enough. And it is so different from Freud's that one might not know that it is the same man and the same society that they are talking about.

BOTH Freud and Fromm see man and society in conflict. But Freud sees the conflict as one between man's "biological self," with its destructive instinctual drives, and society, with its apparatus of coercion and enforced renunciation. Freud's view, in short, is Hobbesean, both in its conception of man and in its notion of the function of society. "There are present in all men," Freud says in *The Future of an Illusion,* "destructive and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural tendencies." "Civilized man has exchanged some part of his chances of [instinctual] happiness for a measure of security" (*Civilization and Its Discontents*). Fromm, on the other hand, is a most manifest Rousseauean: man is born free and good, only to be enslaved and corrupted by an evil society. Since Freud finds the evil drive in man's biologic nature, he refuses to reassure us by holding out the possibility of a cure for the "discontents" of civilization. Fromm has his program all ready.

Freud and Fromm are both essentially rationalists, but of very different kinds. It may seem strange to call Freud a rationalist, but David Riesman not only calls him that (in *Individualism Reconsidered*), he goes on to say that "it would be difficult to find anyone in the Enlightenment who was more so." For reason is Freud's god, and truth—which he identifies with scientific truth—the only epiphany he recognizes. He is even a little Platonic in his rationalism. "One might," he says with a gesture at Plato's celebrated figure of the rider and the chariot, "compare the relation of the ego to the id with that between a rider and his horse," "the ego standing for reason . . . [and] the id standing for the untamed passions." His whole conception of the psychoanalytic cure is rationalistic, for, as Fromm correctly points out, Freud's "psychoanalysis is the attempt to uncover the truth about oneself. . . . The aim of the cure is the restoring of health, and the remedies are truth and reason" (*Escape from Freedom*).

Freud's rationalism is reflected in the way he envisages the conflict within the self. To him it is essentially a division between the ego

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the id, between the reason and the passions, with the superego above as a stern internalized monitor. He does not see that the conflict in the self is not merely the assailment of the ego by the id and its harassment by the superego, but is actually the self divided against itself at all levels—the cleft runs *through* the ego, superego, and id alike, and not merely between them. Because he does not see this, his picture of the ego strikes one as altogether too simple. The ego can hardly be as rational as Freud makes it out to be.

Even in his view of society, Freud permits a strong element of rationalism to creep in, particularly when he deals with religion. To Freud, religion is, of course, an "illusion," but it is an illusion which somehow does not meet with the same kind of tolerant understanding that he extends to most other forms of human self-deception. Now suddenly he discovers that "the time has probably come to replace the consequences of repression by rational mental effort," and so he makes a plea, in just so many words, for "a purely rational basis for cultural laws" (*The Future of an Illusion*). This from Freud, who more than anyone else has convinced us that society and culture cannot have any "purely rational basis"! So Freud's rationalism penetrates even his social thinking. Yet, on the whole, it is a secondary and muted influence in this area, at least so long as he keeps away from religion.

Fromm is somewhat less rationalistic in his view of the self, for his picture of human normativity is complex and many-sided. But he makes up for that by his extreme social and political rationalism, which expresses itself in a simple-minded utopianism that clings to an optimistic faith in schemes of social reconstruction and their power to achieve perfection. Freud is, in a sense, a Voltairean: reason should rule society through a rational, scientific-minded elite, taking account of, perhaps even manipulating, the illusions and self-deceptions of the mass of mankind. Fromm, I emphasize again, is essentially a Rousseauean, who envisages man in his perfection and looks to the perfect—i.e. the rational—society to release this perfection in man.

Both Freud and Fromm are naturalists—Freud a biologistic naturalist and Fromm largely of the culturistic variety. Freud's biologism may be interpreted as a reflection of the late 19th-century scientific outlook, which was biological, evolutionary, and materialistic. Fromm's culturism may, in much the same way, be understood as a reflection of the current scientific mind, with its sociological bias and its uneasy hesitation between a sociological relativism and the effort to find some fixed point in a "pan-human" normative type. But while all this is no doubt true, it is important not to overlook that Freud's biologism and Fromm's culturism both have deeper significance. Insistence on the "biological self" is so necessary for Freud because, as Lionel Trilling has pointed out (*Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture*), this "biological self" represents the "hard, irreducible stubborn core from which the culture may be judged." Freud "needed to believe that there was some point at which it was possible to stand beyond the reach of culture," and that point he found in the inviolable "biological self." Fromm, on the other hand, doubtless finds culturism so appealing because he is passionately convinced that the perfect society (which he imagines to be achievable in history) will provide the necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of the perfect man. The type of naturalism each espouses is thus seen to be closely related to his underlying interest and concern.

Both men very largely misunderstand the inner relation of the self and society. To Freud, the self is essentially individualistic, a self-contained entity prior to society and requiring community for external reasons. Society is, at bottom, no more than an aggregation of individual selves held together by derivative psychological bonds. Freud does not see what the Jewish-Christian tradition has always stressed, and what modern existentialists such as Buber, Jaspers, and Marcel are re-emphasizing, that the human self emerges only in community and has no real existence apart from it. The self is not prior to society, but coeval with it. Fromm, on the other hand, sometimes tends to lose the self in his preoccupation with the "right" social order that he thinks the self needs for its fulfillment; he never seems to realize that even the best social order necessarily institutionalizes—and therefore corrupts as well as implements—the I-Thou community which is the self's true context of being. In neither system does the self really come into its own.

Nor can either system do full justice to the self in its "dramas of history." Freud turns to the multifarious diversity of the historical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

process primarily to find invariant, biologically grounded patterns. Fromm's interest in history, like Rousseau's, is to lay bare the many ways in which evil institutions have corrupted men in the past. Neither understands the full historicity of man, or what this implies for human existence, because neither has a proper sense of human transcendence, of the capacity of the self to transcend all the coherences, social as well as biological, through which it is provisionally defined and in which it is provisionally enclosed. Freud tries to guarantee the integrity of the human self by making it biological, Fromm by grounding it in a normative human nature "the same for man in all ages and all cultures." Neither sees it, where Christian thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr have placed it, in the dimension of being where the "self is enabled to stand as it were above the structures and coherences of the world" facing the eternal (*The Self and the Dramas of History*).

In such an ultimate perspective, Freud's biologism must be judged inadequate and misleading. Yet it does contain a profound insight which the idealistic and the spiritually minded often tend to forget: man's inescapable biological grounding. If it is true, as Paul Tillich insists (in *The Courage to Be*), that "in man nothing is 'merely biological,'" it is also true, as Tillich goes on to say, that "in man . . . nothing is 'merely spiritual.'" "Every cell of [man's] body participates in his freedom," but "every act of his spiritual creativity is nourished by his vital dynamics." We have Freud to thank for emphasizing one half of this truth. Fromm in his own way stresses the other half, by constantly emphasizing that man's nature is more than biological. But a prisoner of his naturalistic presuppositions, he cannot really say what this "beyond-the-biological" is and how it manifests itself in man.

Freud's biologism fosters his stubborn insistence that the trouble lies deep in man, and is not simply the result of adverse social conditions. Freud's view is, as Robert K. Merton has suggested, a biologistic "variety of the 'original sin' doctrine."* Despite its obvious shortcomings, it preserves him from the pitfalls of social utopianism and perfectionism. It brings him to an understanding of what Niebuhr in our own day has insisted on, that history remains ambiguous to the very end.

Fromm's Rousseauism very largely blinds him to this hard wisdom. For him, "sin" is socially derived, and history is ultimately redeemable through human effort. Yet Fromm is surely right in feeling that human aggression and destructiveness are not merely biological, but are somehow emergent out of the human situation (even if Fromm mistakenly identifies the human situation with the social). What both Freud and Fromm lack, it seems to me, is some of the insight that has come down to us in the Biblical tradition, and that has recently been restated by a number of existentialists. It is not the biological constitution of man that is responsible for the human evil in history, nor is it the social order, although both the biological constitution and the social order are involved. Out of man's existential situation—out of the tension between his self-transcending freedom and the inherent limitations of his creatureliness—are engendered the basic insecurity and anxiety which prompt him to "pride" (in the theological sense) and self-aggrandizement. This "pride" and this self-aggrandizement enlist all suitable biological impulses in their service and exploit all serviceable social institutions, but they are not themselves the product of either. They emerge out of the depths of the self in its existential situation. Freud and Fromm each sees an aspect of this truth, but Freud, I feel, somehow comes closer.

If we were to permit ourselves a theological vocabulary, we might, I think, without going too far afield, say that Freud tends to a Manicheanism of a biologistic kind, while Fromm tends to an extreme Pelagianism which glorifies human autonomy and holds man to be sufficient unto himself for salvation. Freud does not see that the tragic dualism pervading human life, however real and beyond the reach of idealistic conjurations, can be neither the first nor the last word on human destiny. Fromm, on the other hand, seems unable to consider that man's desperate plight today, which he describes with such feeling, may be, in part at least, the direct consequence of the unbridled pretensions to autonomy that have characterized modern culture from the Renaissance to our own time. Freud sees man desperately caught between the upper and

Social Theory and Social Structure (1949). See also Zilboorg: "Even the concept of original sin or of the original fall of man finds its empirical counterpart in the findings of psychoanalysis" (*Mind, Medicine, and Man*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nether millstones of his instincts and his culture; Fromm exalts the "all-powerful 'I.'" Neither really understands man's plight or man's hope.

Gregory Zilboorg is right in pointing out that what Freud devoted his life to studying was the "psychological reactions of man *in the state of sin*"; but Freud was not fully aware of what he was doing. He took the "fallen," the sinful state of man, the state of man with which he was empirically acquainted—man at war with himself and his fellow men—as man's original and, so to speak, normative condition. His attitude was therefore deeply pessimistic, though his pessimism was inconsistently relieved here and there by a dim hope engendered out of an irrational faith in reason. Fromm, on the other hand, like all idealists, simply ignores the "fall," brushes aside the insistent lessons of experience, and deals with man as though he were still in his "original rightness." No wonder the glorious creature he describes—glorious when uncorrupted by an evil society—bears little resemblance to Freud's aggressive, libidinal being whom civilization has to beguile and restrain. Fromm's man is essentially untouched by the dreadful disorder of human sinfulness; Freud's man is an imperfectly tamed beast desperately trying to domesticate himself. Neither Freud nor Fromm sees man in his full complexity and his many dimensions, in both his "grandeur" and his "misery," *at once* in the perfection of his original creation and in the radical imperfection of his actual existence. It was to them both that Pascal was speaking when he described his purpose and vocation: "If anyone exalts man, I humble him; if anyone humbles man, I exalt him; and I always contradict him until he understands what an incomprehensible monster man is."

One could go on drawing these comparisons indefinitely, displaying the relative strength and weaknesses of Freud and the revisionists. We cannot accept either completely, and we can certainly learn from both. Is there no way we can judge between them, and in the end prefer one to the other? I think we can, though of course one's judgment will depend on one's fundamental philosophical and theological outlook. For myself, I think that it is Freud who speaks with greater power and out of a deeper reality than do any of the revisionists, even when he speaks of religion, of which he apparently understands so little. Let me say why.

The first thing modern man needs to know, it seems to me, is that his multitude of troubles have their origin in something radically wrong within himself which requires an equally radical cure. He must come to see the evil and irrationality infecting his existence from within and reaching out to all the enterprises in which he is engaged before he can possibly open himself to the grace of God and receive the courage and insight to deal with life in creative fashion. Freud is always telling us the first part of this truth, with deep earnestness and conviction. He will not permit us to exculpate ourselves as blameless innocents victimized by history, society, or culture—which exculpation is precisely what Fromm's social philosophy offers. Freud's teaching reinforces the Jewish-Christian conviction of the dubiousness of all human virtue and the ambiguity of all human achievements; Fromm's repeats the Enlightenment themes of the essential innocence of man, the wickedness of existing society, and man's unlimited power to establish the Kingdom of God on earth—without God. Freud too left God out of his calculations, but he did not pretend to do God's work for him. For that we may be grateful.

We may be grateful, too, for Freud's indignant rejection of sham. Consider his views on religion. He asserts over and over again that God is nothing but the "deified father" who "at one time walked incarnate on the earth," that religion is the "universal obsessional neurosis of humanity" through which "the civilized individual must pass on his way from childhood to maturity," that the dissipation of the religious "illusion" is the next task of human reason. In propounding these views, which he does not hesitate to call "definite conclusions," Freud obviously goes far beyond the psychoanalytic evidence, and tries to make his data bear the burden of a "philosophy" which even his most ardent admirers have admitted to be shallow, crude, and confused. There is, too, a note of strident intransigency in his manner that reminds one uncomfortably of the village atheist.

Some of Freud's disciples and followers have been embarrassed by this side of the master's thought, and have attempted to show that psychoanalysis, even Freudian psychoanalysis, is not really hostile to religion. In the November 1953 issue of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Jules H. Masserman, the distinguished teacher and writer on psychoanalysis,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

published an article entitled "Faith and Delusion in Psychotherapy: The Ur-Defenses of Man," in which he sensationally reverses Freud. Freud considered religion to be an illusion, and good rationalist that he was—at least in this sphere—he felt it his duty to try to dissipate the illusion. Psychic disturbances he regarded as at bottom disturbances of the patient's sense of reality; the underlying aim of psychotherapy, as I have pointed out, he held to be the restoration of that sense, with the consequent strengthening of the ego (that is, the reason) over against the id and the superego. Masserman, turning Freud upside down, asks if it is not possible that "psychotherapy actually consists in the reestablishment of certain delusions necessary to mankind?" One such "necessary" delusion he finds in religion, which, he proceeds to show, consists of certain "curiously unrealistic, paradoxical, but ubiquitous Ur-defenses of man," as "essential to man's 'psychic' economy as [physiological processes] are necessary to the maintenance of his bodily integrity." What are these "Ur-defenses of Man"? Masserman mentions three, relating each to some phase of infantile experience: (1) "the delusion of invulnerability and immortality"; (2) "the delusion of the omnipotent [divine] servant," God always at the command of man; and (3) the delusion of "man's kindness to man," that "in time of need one can seek and actually obtain succor from one's fellow man." So far from condemning these illusory beliefs "men cherish and live by," Masserman even raises the question of whether it would not be better to drop the word "delusion" in dealing with them, though of course they are "unrealistic." "As to therapy," he goes on, "we dare not disregard the evidence that delusions, in a deeply humanitarian sense, are . . . sacred, and that we tamper with them at our patient's—and our own—peril."

THERE we have it. What Freud regards with such distate as irrational delusions, Masserman holds to be "essential convictions . . . sacred . . . necessary to man's very existence." What Freud, in his rationalism, is so intent upon dissipating, Masserman urges us to cherish. On a psychoanalytic basis, mind you, Masserman reverses Freud and vindicates religion.

But what kind of religion does he vindicate? The very beliefs Dr. Masserman strives to vindicate as the essentials of religion, because they are the Ur-defenses of man, are the beliefs that Biblical faith is especially concerned to question and reject. Surely it is obvious that in Biblical faith man is *not* immortal and invulnerable; he is as the grass that withereth, here today and gone tomorrow, and whatever "eternal life" he may look forward to, or hope for, comes to him not by virtue of his nature but as the promise and grace of God. As for the second article in Dr. Masserman's creed, the belief in God as "omnipotent servant," merely to state this belief is to indicate how abhorrent it is to Biblical faith, in which it is God who is sovereign lord and man his servant or slave. Nor does the third Ur-defense fare better. The Bible warns against illusions about simple human good will: "The heart [of man] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Dr. Masserman's Freudian vindication of religion against Freud is something that the man of Biblical faith cannot easily accept. Freud, with his *rejection* of religion, was closer to—or at least less distant from—the Biblical position than is Dr. Masserman with his *vindication* of it. For Freud regarded the religious beliefs that Dr. Masserman calls the "Ur-defenses of man" as essentially delusions, and here Biblical faith agrees with him: they are delusions. Freud's own Ur-defense was his faith in science; this, too, Biblical religion calls idolatrous and delusive. It is, therefore, even more radical than Freud, but it cannot help recognizing, it seems to me, that in Freud's iconoclasm there is an aspect of God's truth that is almost completely lost in the "pro-religionism" of our time.

Much of what Freud took for religion was sham, and deserved his hostility. Above all, he hated sham. He had nothing but contempt for those who presented religion under false colors so as to deprive it of its "scandal" and challenge. In the midst of one of his diatribes against religion, he thunders: "One would like to count oneself among the believers so as to admonish the philosophers who try to preserve the God of religion by substituting for him an impersonal, shadowy, abstract principle, and say [to them]: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.'"

It is in such outbursts, reflecting a spirit that runs right through his writings, that one who espouses a faith he rejected, and rejects the faith he espoused, can nevertheless see in Sigmund Freud, despite himself, a witness to the God of Truth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS FROM READERS

"Militant Jew"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the excerpts from Melville's *Journal* (February, "Herman Melville in Jerusalem"), reference is made to Warder Crisson of Philadelphia. The name is misspelled (whether by Melville or not I have no way of knowing); it is Warder Cresson. And the case is not so sad as Melville makes it out. There is an account of this convert to Judaism in Jacob Raisin's *Gentile Reactions to Jewish Ideals* (1953), pp. 784-5. Cresson, who was the author of a number of books, originally went to Palestine with the intention of being a missionary to the Jews but decided to become a Jew instead. This led to great difficulties with his family in Philadelphia, from whom he finally separated, taking one of his sons with him. He became a leader in the community and "when he died, November 6, 1860 [some three years after the date of the Melville journal entry, as you see], all the places of business in Jerusalem were closed and the entire Jewish community followed after his coffin. He was buried on the Mount of Olives, and his grave has become a shrine to which many repair to offer prayers. . . . Cresson was a militant Jew and wrote various tracts and articles denouncing the missionary efforts to convert Jews to Christianity. . . . He will be remembered as one of the very first . . . who advocated the founding of Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine. . . . He felt that 'All that is now wanted is a sufficient sum of money to commence with, and then, willing, industrious hearts and hands, and all will go well, and peace and plenty will soon succeed the present state of poverty and suffering.' "

Not so pitiful a case after all! And though he cannot hold a candle to Melville as a writer of English prose, his prediction holds up better than the gloomy forebodings of the journal.

Milton Hindus

Brandeis University
Waltham, Mass.

"Free Practical Intellectuals"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I wish to endorse heartily the arguments of Morton White in his reply to H. Stuart Hughes in your January "Letters from Readers." I do so as a relatively late convert to his ideal of the "free practical intellectual," having been strongly inoculated at college with the Spenglerian virus (I wrote my A.B. thesis mostly on Spengler, on whom I believe Mr. Hughes wrote his Ph.D. thesis), and having consequently taken for granted too much of the moral quietism on which Spengler's effects, like Toynbee's, depend. It seems to me now that the spectacle of a Dean Acheson, a Kennan or, yes, even a Robert Cutler (about whose mental equipment I confess I know almost nothing), moving in and out of office but remaining clearly felt presences whether in or out, is the most satisfying aspect of our public life. At the risk of being banal, I would say that no benefit of government is worth more than this possibility.

Our nostalgia for the days when intellectuals seemed to exert a more direct pressure on government seems to me to rest on a false analogy. What looks to some people like government in the 16th- or even 19th-century sense of the word is usually better described in the 20th century as administration. The government which, for convenience's sake, used to be embodied in the person of a ruler or small group of ministers, has now become, except during emergencies, more of what Santayana used to call a "moral stress," diffused and often seemingly quiescent. And when we look into a Machiavelli, an Erasmus, Milton, or Bentham, we see that, for the most part, they kept a respectable independence from "government" in the most tangible sense. Ideas worked more openly, swiftly, and directly. States were smaller and more mobile; things happened faster. These may be truisms but I think they are easily forgotten. To a degree, Mr. Acheson is still a power in government; for his actions, his opinions, and person are still very much in the minds both of the actual administrators and those of age to speculate competently about foreign affairs. The only answer, I should say, to the despair of our current political parties so eloquently voiced by Irving Howe and his associates of *Dissent* is to point to this perpetually convening congress of "free practical intellectuals" which our mid-century way

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of life has made possible. Perhaps we may miss the drama and panoply of more direct government, we may even regret the dynastic abruptness of a system in which intellectuals may safely devote their whole attention to chess and memoirs when out of office. The fact remains, however, that no true Milton can remain mute or inglorious very long with Washington only a five-minutes' telephone connection away from any part of the country. And if the appearance of Hugh Gaitskell on Boston TV sets for three nights running, delivering the Harvard Godkin Lectures, at the height of a British parliamentary crisis, is not drama, then I don't know what drama is. We have to take it where we find it.

R. W. FLINT

Cambridge, Mass.

American Council for Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Oscar Handlin's anniversary contribution to your January 1957 issue dealing with the history of the American Jewish Committee contains a regrettable misstatement of the position of the American Council for Judaism. He refers, at one point, to "the wholesale condemnation of Israel and of Zionism that began to emanate from the American Council for Judaism."

The Council has most scrupulously sought, in all its public statements, to record its opposition to *Zionism* (the worldwide political movement) while at the same time avoiding any judgment as to the conduct of *Israel* (a sovereign, foreign state). It is our view that Zionism, with its program aimed at Jews, regardless of their citizenship, imposes upon Jews the responsibility of accepting or rejecting that program—and the Council chooses to reject it. Approval or condemnation of Israel, however, is no responsibility of Jews, as *Jews*, we think, but rather a function of the governments of other sovereign nations, including the United States.

I shall be grateful if you will correct the record in this regard.

MAXWELL STEINHARDT
Treasurer

The American Council for Judaism
New York, New York

MR. HANDLIN *writes:*

I regret that Mr. Steinhardt considers my judgment of the Council's position a misstatement. I can assure him that it is based upon a careful—and often sympathetic—reading of the Council's publications.

Goldsmiths Street in Majorca

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to make a single point with regard to Robert Graves's fascinating article, "A Dead Branch on the Tree of Israel" (February). Goldsmiths Street in Palma is no longer a ghetto, but as recently as 1930 it was still referred to as the Street of the Jews.

One Friday evening I went to Goldsmiths Street to buy a piece of jewelry. . . . As I entered the shop, I noticed lighted candles in the living quarters at the rear, just beyond a door the shopkeeper had left open when he came to wait on me. These looked very much (and rather excitingly, to me) like the traditional Sabbath eve candles. When I asked the shopkeeper about them, he made sounds that inferred it was not really my concern and he hurried back to shut the door.

This was twenty-seven years ago, and at that time there were not enough American tourists in Majorca to provide even an illegal *minyan.*

ALBERT MARGOLIES

New York, New York

Footnote to Duke of Windsor

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In your January issue you carry an exchange of letters between Mr. Irving M. Engel and Mrs. Lillian Blumberg McCall *re* the Duke of Windor's pro-Nazi sympathies.

Mrs. McCall quotes the Duchess's diary, where the latter claimed that neither she nor the Duke had ever heard of M. Bedaux. I happen to know that the Duke's friendship with this sinister figure long pre-dated his marriage to Mrs. Simpson. I used to work as a chemist for a very large concern in London. There, in the board room, hung a picture of the then chairman of the board riding to the hounds with the Duke and M. Bedaux . . . taken when M. Bedaux had introduced his unpleasant system of labor performance in that particular plant, about 1930 or 1931.

HENRY S. BONDI

Elmhurst, New York

Omission

The article "Progress of a Suburban Jewish Community," by Herbert J. Gans, in the February COMMENTARY, was published by permission of Marshall Sklare, editor of the forthcoming volume *The Sociology of the Jews of America* (Free Press). The article was originally prepared for and will appear in that book.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Judaism and the Zealots

MACCABEES, ZEALOTS, AND JOSEPHUS—AN INQUIRY INTO JEWISH NATIONALISM IN THE GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD. By WILLIAM REUBEN FARMER. Columbia University Press. 239 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

THE Dead Sea Scrolls have brought new life into the field of Biblical scholarship. Tempers are flaring. Allegations are made. Refutations thunder. And the darkness that has covered the inter-testamentary period especially is pierced by sudden illuminations and flashes of insight. Once stirred, this excitement can spread into areas of scholarship which have for long been regarded as routine and well established. Even the works of a solid and staid historian like Josephus can provide the thrills of mystery and detection, and a period of Jewish history that is somewhat poorly documented may still give scope for the exercise of Sherlock-Holmesian talents.

If you catch a foreign spy in one city, and another foreign spy in another city, the thought suggests itself that you may be dealing with a "spy ring." If you find the Jews of Palestine rebelling against Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C.E., and some two centuries later against the Romans, it only stands to reason—does it not?—that the same religio-nationalistic forces must be at work. Or are they? The historian Flavius Josephus, an eyewitness of the Jewish rebellion against Rome, is very careful to point out that it was fought and led by a section of the Jewish population that was by no means representative of the rest, and which most decidedly had no use for the basic religious convictions and teachings of Judaism. There is no love lost for the Zealots on the part of Josephus. On the other hand, he has nothing but admiration and praise for the Maccabean heroes who two centuries before, fighting for God and country, had won independence for their nation. Two entirely different types of rebellion, therefore two different judgments are required—as Josephus clearly demonstrates.

But wait a minute: do we have some data on the witness himself? We know Josephus's family background. He claims descent from the Hasmoneans. But his record is not, to say the least, very straightforward. First he fought as a commander on the Jewish side in the war against Rome. Later he went over to the enemy and watched the rest of the war from the safety of the headquarters of Vespasian and Titus. After Judea's fall, he spent his time trying to demonstrate to the Roman authorities that what difficulties there were in Judea had been the work of "zealots," of a lunatic fringe; the religio-national tradition of the Jews did not encourage them, but was really conducive to submission to the Roman yoke. In short, Josephus is no mere historian.

Now let's examine his testimony again. Isn't it suspicious that he does not mention the Maccabees in connection with the Jewish rebellion against Rome? This can only mean one thing: the witness is trying to hide something. And what is he hiding? It's obvious: the undoubted connection between the Maccabees and the Jewish rebellion against Rome.

In other words, the Zealots are not a lunatic fringe, after all. They are merely Pharisees with guns. But they are inspired by the same faith and hopes as their less activist brethren. They are deeply religious, and convinced that God will protect the Promised Land if only the party to whom He promised it will abide by the terms of the Covenant. The heathen will not be allowed to profane the sanctuary now, even as he was foiled when his name was Sennacherib, and God Himself intervened, and just as he was foiled when his name was Antiochus Epiphanes, and the divine work was wrought through the glorious Maccabees. The example of the glorious Maccabees not only spurred the Zealots to action, but it surely lived on in the hearts of the people as a whole.

If only Josephus had condescended to mention the Maccabees in as much as a line when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

writing of the Jewish war against Rome, Dr. William Reuben Farmer would not have had to go elsewhere to find his proofs for demonstrating such a connection. But you cannot beat that silence!

BUT why, we may ask, is Dr. Farmer so interested in demonstrating a connection between the Maccabees of the 2nd century B.C.E. and the Jewish nationalism of the 1st century C.E.? It is, as he tells us himself, to open the way "for a rewriting of Jewish history during the Roman period in which full justice may be done to the continuity between the Jewish nationalism of the Roman period with that of the Maccabean period." This, in turn, suggests that "the history and literature of the Qumran community, the ministry of John the Baptist and of Jesus, and the history and literature of the primitive Palestinian church will all find their proper setting against the background of that mainstream of Jewish nationalism which it has been the purpose of this book to illumine."

Take, for example, the description of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as given in the Gospel of John 12: 12, 13:

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees, and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

Now this might suggest, as Dr. Farmer himself mentions, "the image of an Oriental monarch seated in majestic splendor, being cooled by slaves waving huge fan-shaped palm branches." But to Dr. Farmer it also suggests another possibility. In the apocryphal Second Book of Maccabees describing the triumphal processions into the Temple by Judas Maccabeus and his followers, we read (10:8):

So, bearing wands wreathed with leaves and fair boughs and palms, they offered hymns of praise to Him who had prospered the cleaning of His own place. . . .

The conventional picture which has been drawn of the historical background of Jesus' ministry has never made it really possible for the reader of the New Testament to get a clear picture of Jesus himself. He can be understood neither in terms of the this-worldly Zealots nor in those of the other-worldly apocalypticists. But if we assume that the Maccabean pattern of apocalypticism coupled with Zealot nationalism survived into the Roman period as an inspiring memory, and as an example to be followed, then Jesus steps forth, in the words of Amos Wilder, as a real "flesh-and-blood Jewish patriot who loved his people and his country"—or, as Dr. Farmer would have it, "a patriot whose self-sacrificial love is not to be surpassed by any Judas Maccabeus who laid down his life to save his people."

The Dead Sea scroll known as "The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness," with its mixture of apocalyptic expectations and down-to-earth battle regulations, is adduced as a proof that the Maccabean pattern was, in fact, still very much in evidence during the Roman period.

THIS new view of Jesus is certainly suggestive; and it is really quite possible that Jesus was more of a Jewish patriot than is conceded by some scholars, and more of an apocalypticist than is allowed for by others. What is unfortunate for Dr. Farmer's thesis is the nature of his evidence. To take the case of the Maccabean "palm branches" first. The Second Book of Maccabees begins by introducing the festival of Chanukah as "the feast of tabernacles in the month of Kislev." And the very chapter in this book which supplied Dr. Farmer with the suggestive reference to palm branches tells us, in Verse 6, that the Maccabees celebrated Chanukah "for eight days with gladness like a feast of tabernacles, remembering how, not long before, during the feast of tabernacles they had been wandering like wild beasts in the mountains and the caves." That is to say, they were now making up for the lost opportunity of celebrating the joyous festival of Succoth, one of whose characteristic observances is the waving of palm branches.

No doubt, the author of the Gospel of John meant *his* palm branches to be understood as the paraphernalia of royalty; but if he had also meant us to infer any parallels with the Maccabean "feast of tabernacles in the month of Kislev," he would certainly have made this inference somewhat easier for us to draw.

More serious, however, is Dr. Farmer's treatment of Josephus. Dr. Farmer knows that a complete silence reigns over the literary sources of the Pharisaic tradition when it comes to the Maccabees. He counters by reminding us that the festival of Chanukah was observed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New HARPER Books

Aspects of Human Equality

Fifteenth Symposium of the Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion

431 pages • **$5.00**

Edited by *Lyman Bryson, Clarence H. Faust, Louis Finkelstein & R. M. MacIver*

Nineteen scholars and intellectual leaders explore the problem of human equality from many standpoints: as a legal concept, a social value, a religious value; as it affects educational philosophy; as it operates on and is operated on by international law and international relations; and its historic development as both a religious and a political principle.

Integrity and Compromise

In the Series of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies

150 pages • **$2.50**

PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONSCIENCE
Edited by *R. M. MacIver*

When is compromise a realistic acceptance and adjustment of different points of view? When does it become a surrender of values and a betrayal of self? Twelve eminent contributors essay answers based on experience in diverse fields and in light of the pressures and the ethical dilemmas created by modern civilization.

At your bookstore or from
HARPER & BROTHERS
N.Y. 16

in the Roman period. He even gives us the full text of the *'al ha-nissim* prayer. But what does that prayer say? "In the days of the Hasmonean, Mattathias son of Johanan, the High Priest, and his sons, when the iniquitous power of Greece rose up against Thy people Israel to make them forgetful of Thy Law . . . then didst Thou in Thy abundant mercy rise up for them in the time of their trouble. . . ." And the climax of this prayer is the memory of the purification of the Temple, and the kindling of the lights.

This is all the Talmud remembers, too, adding to it only the story of the miracle of the oil. Note also that, in the *'al ha-nissim* prayer, the real "heroes," Judas Maccabeus and Simon, are not even remembered by name.

Moreover, a study of Josephus's treatment of the later Maccabean period—of a time, that is to say, which did not require any conscious apologetic "rewriting" in the light of the Jewish War against Rome—should have convinced Dr. Farmer that the Pharisees had grown ever more disenchanted with the Hasmonean priest-kings. (See especially Book XIII of Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews.*) Nor do certain pseudepigraphical writings of the Roman period leave us in any doubt as to the utter detestation in which the latter Hasmoneans were held by the pious. Besides, if the Pharisees had made no conscious effort to erase the memory of Maccabean glories long before Josephus's apologetic attempts, it is hard to understand why not a single one of the Rabbinic sermons preached on the occasion of Chanukah, which have been preserved in the *Pesikta deRab Kahana,* makes the slightest reference to the historical events leading up to the institution of this festival. Against all this, Dr. Farmer's marshaling of arguments on the basis of *Megillath Ta'anith,* that ancient calendar of memorable days in which vague reminiscences of Maccabean victories have survived, seems to lack compelling force.

In short, *Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus* is a fascinating, indeed, a thrilling book—the kind you cannot put down. It contains, as we have tried to indicate, many suggestive elements, and it opens up new vistas for the study of a period in history which is of supreme importance to both Judaism and Christianity. But, when all the evidence has been con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sidered and the jury asked for their verdict, this verdict will be neither "innocent" nor "guilty." Recourse will have to be had to a formula known from Scottish jurisprudence: "not proven."

Chagall

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE BIBLE. By MARC CHAGALL. Introduction by MEYER SCHAPIRO. Text (Poem) by JEAN WAHL. Harcourt, Brace. 15 pp.; 105 black and white plates; 16 lithographs in color. $25.00.

CHAGALL. By LIONELLO VENTURI. The Taste of Our Time Series. Skira. 124 pp.; 53 color plates. $5.75.

Reviewed by CLEMENT GREENBERG

THE only one comparable in our time with Picasso as a graphic artist is Chagall (not Rouault), and nothing even the former has done as a graphic artist quite matches in intensity or integrity these illustrations of Chagall's for the Bible. Commissioned in 1930 by the late Ambroise Vollard, the renowned art dealer and art publisher, they are now presented complete in a setting that is perhaps not as magnificent as Vollard intended, but which is splendid nevertheless.

That Chagall, whose production in oil has on the whole declined over the last thirty years, has been able during that time to make such progress in his graphic work has to do, I feel, with his essential conservatism, his profound and sophisticated nostalgia for the museum. A similar nostalgia, but with different roots (in culture rather than in temperament or autobiography), has exempted Picasso's graphic work from the even more general decline his painting, too, has suffered over recent decades. The fact that the print has never been a quite appropriate vehicle for modernist art in the making is what seems precisely to enable both artists to continue to exploit it successfully now that the *élan* of their original contribution to modernist art has faded.

The print may, in such hands as Chagall's and Picasso's, still be able to register the results of innovation, but not since Goya has it lent itself to the working out of innovation. The great etchers of the 19th century, like Meryon and Bresdin, had no part in the radical changes pictorial art underwent in their time. Modernism has been almost exclusively an affair of paint and, except during its Cubist phase, has shifted the emphasis cumulatively to direct color as well as to surface design. Even Manet's preoccupation with contrasts of dark and light was something quite different from that reliance on gradations of dark and light which was intrinsic to the naturalism of pre-Impressionist art; and to the extent of that difference Manet's art fails of its characteristic effects when translated into ink on paper. Etching and engraving—if not lithography and the woodcut—lose their traditional point when it is no longer a question of the subtle transitions of shade and shadow by which a "body" illusion of space and volume is articulated.

In his paintings themselves Chagall has hardly ever abandoned the indication of illusionist space, or failed to hint at modeling; but given that his style as a *painter* was formed under the aegis of Matisse and Picasso, the limits within which he could satisfy his vein for chiaroscuro in paint itself has remained relatively narrow. To give it freer play, he has had to resort to the needle and plate. It is an unexampled use of chiaroscuro that we see then, in which its traditional application is suggested, but a modernist flatness is actually realized, so that something of the best of both worlds seems preserved. In time to come Chagall's prints will possibly be rated higher than all but a comparative few of his paintings. All that is too ripe, too sauced and sweetened in his oils (significantly, the best of his "easel" pictures to be seen in this country lately were on unglazed squares of tile) is purged when his talent has only the etcher's needle or lithographer's pencil at its disposal. Nor does a virtuoso command of the etching medium seduce him into virtuoso effects. The drawing may at times go over the edge of manneredness or even of cuteness in the deliberate clumsiness of its simplifications, but in these illustrations for the Bible this does not happen often or obtrusively enough to mar the total impression of an art so genuinely inspired that it can afford to humble itself entirely to the text upon which it makes pictorial comment.

THERE are many things to praise in these etchings: the velvet furriness of their blacks and grays, the dramatic patterning of contrasts, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weightless density of the masses whether dark or light, the fluid, infinitely various yet incisive line, the discrete and yet masterly mixing of techniques (for drypoint and soft-ground as well as straight needle-and-acid etching seem to have been brought into play) the *mise-en-scène* by which the anecdotal meaning of each illustration is emphasized and enhanced—and so on. But I would call attention particularly to the colored lithographs that in groups of four separate the four sections ("Genesis," "Moses," "Kings," and "Prophets") into which the etchings are divided, and I would point most to the last group, "Prophets."

Lithography is the most direct and flexible of the print mediums, but ink cannot be handled as freely as oil pigment or even water color; it will not permit a similar gradualness of transition from one shade or tone to another. This very limitation purifies Chagall's color in a way much like that in which being confined to black and white purifies his design in his etchings. If in the etchings, however, we see restored some of that vigorous crudeness and abruptness by which his paintings originally won admiration, there is in the colored lithographs a new blending of brilliance and force without precedent in anything he has done before. Here, for almost the first time, the artist exploits rather than succumbs to sophistication, and the result can stand next to anything by Matisse. Never has his color been employed so convincingly as structure, never so opulently for its own sake, and never has it had more power to move than on these folio pages. (I have, however, seen wall-picture-size lithographs Chagall has done recently that achieve a like success.)

The most important factor perhaps in this triumph is Chagall's changed approach to pictorial space: the generalized background is no longer marked off so distinctly from figures or objects in the foreground by differences of color value, color intensity, or color warmth; now background and foreground are joined together in a more abstract, less determinate kind of space any point of which is interchangeable with any other as far as the illusion of distance from the eye is concerned. The effect is to enhance the role of the flat picture plane and its four sides, which in turn bestows a more emphatic and spectacular unity upon the picture itself. And all this is done, first and foremost, by bringing the different colors closer together in every sense except that of specific hue. As with almost every resounding victory in art, a paradox is involved: by way of the print, to which he was drawn in the first place by his conservative inclinations, Chagall's art has reached a point of modernity not yet attained in his easel pictures.

Meyer Schapiro's appreciative introduction covers nearly every aspect of the Bible etchings that lends itself to words (he does not touch on the lithographs) and strikes one more as a labor of love than as something done simply to provide an appropriate text for the occasion. I am not so conscious here as in other of Professor Schapiro's efforts at appreciation or criticism of the strain to leave nothing unsaid; it is as if Chagall's humility toward the Biblical word had inspired in him a similar humility toward the illustrations of that word. But Jean Wahl's longish poem in free verse, "The Word Is Graven," which is offered as the main text of *Illustrations for the Bible,* is a let-down; I'm afraid its banality cannot be blamed altogether upon the transformation it has undergone in being rendered into English from French.

Special Offer!

THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

a bi-weekly magazine of Jewish opinion, is published by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, founded by Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan. This stimulating magazine is now in its 23rd year of continuous publication.

Reconstructionism has become the most influential independent Jewish movement of the last two decades. You can keep informed and derive a great deal of pleasure by reading THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

Try it for 6 issues at the special introductory price of only $1.00. Mail the coupon *today*.

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, Dept. C,
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

Enclosed is $1.00. Please send me 6 issues of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

Name .....

Address .....

City & State .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lionello Venturi's book, part of Skira's small-format series called "The Taste of Our Time," is valuable for the hitherto unfamiliar paintings to which its reproductions introduce us. The color in the plates, as usual in Skira books, and especially when the scale is much reduced, tends to be too brilliant, but we have all learned by this time, I hope, to expect information or reminders rather than aesthetic experience from reproductions of oil paintings. Professor Venturi's text is, for all the unqualified admiration it lavishes upon its subject, perfunctory; Chagall is his favorite modern painter, and he has written too often upon him—but never critically enough. Nor is Professor Venturi really at ease with modern art since it stopped being Impressionist, and much of what he says, and has said, in behalf of Chagall sounds arbitrary because it lacks reference to the true context of the latter's art.

It is simply not true, for instance, that Chagall has recognized the "need for poetry in painting to a greater extent than any of his contemporaries"; and it is still inappropriate to say that "with the passing of years he has developed into a colorist comparable to the greatest in the history of painting." It is somehow significant in connection with the latter remark, that Professor Venturi nowhere mentions Matisse's truly enormous influence upon Chagall: an influence that affected his design as well as his color, and whose total role in the formation of his art is equal in importance to the influence of Cubism. Perhaps if Professor Venturi had a clearer grasp of the point of Matisse's as well as Picasso's best work, he would be able to approach Chagall's art less uncritically. That would certainly make his praise of it more cogent.

The Nazi Problem

GERMANY IN THE 20TH CENTURY. By EDMOND VERMEIL. Praeger. 288 pp. $5.50.

THE RISE AND FALL OF NAZI GERMANY. By T. L. JARMAN. New York University Press. 388 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

"IT IS truly a miracle to trace the development of our movement," Hitler said in 1935, when he looked back over the past sixteen years and compared his present power with its humble beginnings. "To posterity it will appear a fairy tale." By now there are plenty of fairy tales. There is the fairy tale of the Marxists, who (having failed to account for any such possibility in their cosmology) write off the whole fascist episode as the last convulsions of capitalism; there is the fairy tale of the virtuous Germans, who deny all responsibility for Nazism, as if it were a sudden unpredictable visitation from without, like the Black Death or the Mongol invasions of the Middle Ages; and there is the fairy tale of the professional anti-Germans who find nothing odd at all in Nazism: it was merely, they say, the natural expression of ordinary German nastiness. And then there is the fairy tale of the European left, according to which Hitler himself was a person of no importance, "the world's most inflated nonentity" as I read in one of today's press cuttings, a mere nobody, as that Panjandrum of the *New Statesman,* Mr. Leonard Woolf, declares, accidentally tossed up, as such men are, by a period of revolution. But somehow I do not think that these are the kind of fairy tales that Hitler was thinking of when he thus foreshadowed the opinions of posterity.

The duty of the historian is not merely to narrate: it is to explain. Unfortunately, once one has accepted this truism, it is easy to go too far, and the trouble with our second-class historians is that instead of explaining, they feel it their duty to explain away. As we read their dreary narratives, their careful parade of causes and consequences, their profound retrospective judgments, all problems fade away and we are left with a tedious demonstration that everything which happened was bound to happen, precisely as it did happen, and an unavoidable impression that it would have been equally bound to happen even if it had been diametrically opposite to what did in fact happen. And then we ask whether such an explanation really explains anything. The test is to ask these infallible explainers what will happen next. At that point, we generally find, they suddenly fail.

Professor Vermeil is such a historian. No doubt he is very distinguished. He is a professor of the Sorbonne and has written much on the subject. No doubt he knows a lot about the views of Pan-German ideologues in the past. And no doubt, too, he is right—as far as he goes. If one grubs away in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

works of Fichte or Gobineau or Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one can find views comparable with those expressed by Hitler and Himmler and Rosenberg. But why, we ask, did all these forces lead to Nazism in one generation rather than another? Why was it Adolf Hitler rather than another who harnessed these forces? In Professor Vermeil's narrative everything follows everything else as if no alternative was possible. Fact follows fact with dreary accuracy; movements "come on the scene"; there is nothing new under the sun; and "consequently" what happened was perfectly natural. Nazism was the logical development of a central tendency in German history: there is no problem to explain.

YOU CAN PUBLISH YOUR BOOK
Free brochure tells how we published 2000 books for authors. Free editorial appraisal. Write Dept. CO-3.
EXPOSITION PRESS / 386 4th Ave., N.Y. 16

Best Book Contest for 1957
$1600 Cash Awards. All Types of manuscripts invited. For Contest rules and details of famous publishing plan, write for Brochure CC, or send manuscript.
Pageant Press, 101 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. 3

Once a revolution has happened it is always easy to look back and find its "origins"; but often these supposed "origins" are not significant causes at all: they are the intellectual garbage which, having long festered in stagnant corners of society, has only accidentally been swirled together and brought to light by a force which may originate in some quite different quarter. It is quite possible that Pan-German rubbish would have continued for decades in Germany as the jargon of inconspicuous crackpot schoolmasters if Hitler had not obtained power and turned it into an orthodoxy. The central problem of modern Germany history is not where Hitler found this dead rubbish, but how Hitler happened, how he was able to galvanize it suddenly into terrible life. For who, in the 1920's, could have predicted that the most highly educated, highly disciplined, highly industrialized country in Europe would surrender itself willingly, without revolution or civil war, and without effective after-thought, to an uneducated, foreign, bohemian terrorist, an unscrupulous, megalomaniac criminal? And who could have predicted that this bohemian criminal, without any advantages of birth or wealth or education, would, from nothing, create a movement with which he could capture this power, and having captured it, would carry through a revolution, create an army, outmaneuver the former victors of Germany, and having raised his country, in five years, from utter weakness into terrifying power, make war, and conquer—however briefly—the whole continent of Europe—just as he had promised to do as a penniless, unemployable dreamer in the slums of Vienna, the beer halls of Munich? Surely Hitler was right: posterity *ought* to regard such a story almost as a fairy tale: a horrible, cautionary fairy tale.

It is the great merit of Mr. Jarman's book that he does recognize this problem. Consequently I have found his book more useful, more readable, more sensible than any other work of comparable scope on the subject. No one, I believe, can hope to understand or explain Nazism unless he is prepared to admit the reality of this problem, and unless, furthermore, he is willing to make a distinction which our ideologically minded historians seem incapable of making: that is, to admit that Hitler, without whom Nazism could not have existed—for he preceded it, founded it, nurtured it, expressed it, and to the end controlled it—was *both* a revolutionary leader of genius *and* the meanest, most squalid character who has ever, by genius, conquered great political power. In the 1930's too many observers recognized the first fact and therefore, because they could not make this distinction, refused even to conceive the second. Since 1945 the second is a platitude; but because the distinction still seems beyond the capacity of the average man, and even the average historian, the first fact is stubbornly denied and Hitler's rise, being therefore the rise of a nobody, must be ascribed to impersonal historic forces which, though now obvious, seem to have attracted no attention at the time. Fortunately Mr. Jarman can make this distinction. He also has a sound historical sense which enables him, instead of being smothered by his sources, to select them judiciously and trust his own selective judgment. There may be nothing new in his book: it is essentially

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a summary of known or knowable facts; but it is an altogether excellent summary: it leaves out nothing that is significant and much (thank God!) that is insignificant; and his two chapters on "The German Enigma" and "The Positive Side of the Nazi Regime" are worth a ton of that uncritical denigration, self-exculpation, and "explanation" to which we have recently become accustomed.

British Fiction

THE SAILOR, SENSE OF HUMOUR, AND OTHER STORIES. By V. S. PRITCHETT. Knopf. 369 pp. $4.50.

ANGLO-SAXON ATTITUDES. By ANGUS WILSON. Viking. 410 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by LESLIE A. FIEDLER

V. S. PRITCHETT is an anomalous figure in recent British literature, though perhaps the most interesting thing about him is how little he permits that fact to show. Lower middle class in origin, he never attended the university, moving on from an early career in business (he was, among other things, a traveling salesman) to journalism. And he has remained a professional writer, producing his novels, travel books, critical essays, and short stories while working as a foreign correspondent, broadcaster, and literary editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*. He has, however, never permitted his class differences from the writers (Graham Greene or Henry Green, Evelyn Waugh or Elizabeth Bowen, E. M. Forster or Christopher Isherwood) who have determined the tone and tenor of the contemporary English novel to induce in him the surly defiance, the ostentatious rough surface of other occasional outsiders like D. H. Lawrence or even Wyndham Lewis.

I do not mean that he has avoided the world in which he began, the world of religious dissent and the hunger for money—far from it. A novel like his *Mr. Beluncle* is rooted in precisely such class experiences, while his stories return again and again to the lower levels of a rigidly structured society, whose fixed distinctions he makes the very substance of his work. In style, however, in *air*, he has adapted to the prevailing upper-class modes; he has "passed."

It is this refusal to reject good literary manners which will, I suspect, isolate Pritchett, for all his excellence, from the newer generations of British writers, the Wains and the Amises and those who will follow, though he might otherwise have provided for such anti-mandarin writers a guide and example. It is as a critic that Pritchett's force is chiefly felt; and the essays in *The Living Novel* are, many of them at least, full of genuine insight and revelation rendered with grace and wit; but the whole is so unremittingly amateurish and off-hand, so resolutely relaxed as to be finally a little annoying—an attempt to demonstrate that the professional journalist out of Ipswich can beat Lord David Cecil at his own polished game. The point is never (and here Mr. Pritchett has taken on the central pose of the early 20th-century British upper middle class) to appear too much in earnest lest one appear underbred.

The limitations of Pritchett are never more clear than when he confronts such underbred masterpieces as *Ulysses*, examples of a "serious" avant-garde tradition that baffles him; or when, on a lower level, he is brought face to face with a Continental "serious" treatment of politics as in Koestler. He has aspired to and achieved membership in a society in which gentlemen converse humanely and wittily about books and events: an anti-academic world in which the professor's organized (and grubbily vocational) interest in art seems heavy-handed and dull. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Mr. Pritchett has been deploring lately the tendency, now strong on both sides of the Atlantic, for young writers and critics to enter the universities in search of jobs and security; though as phrased, his objections have a more ingenuously old-fashioned ring, referring to the academy as a place of isolation and refuge from the outer world of real experience. However true this may have been of the university world of Mr. Pritchett's youth, or however true it may continue to be of Oxford and Cambridge, it is quite impertinent to the facts of the case, at, say, the University of Nebraska or the North Carolina College for Women in our country, or the "red-brick" universities of Reading or Sheffield or Swansea in England.

IN SUCH provincial cities, the new declassed professional, writer or not, lives a life of petty-bourgeois squalor that does not separate him from but rather presses him down into the new hyper-bureaucratized world. Here he finds not the menace of isolation but the threat of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This *I Believe*

Dora Russell*

"To love the springing of fresh life must teach us that to die and to lose those human creatures who have been to us fountains of clear water, cloak and fireside in bleak weather, rest in weariness, eager life in moments of joy is our own individual sorrow that must not darken for us or for others the abundant life of the world. Those we love live on for us in what they have given to our souls, we in what we have given to the souls of others, to children, to the young whom we may teach, to lovers; we live in the words we have spoken or written for other men and women. We live in whatever mark of creation we have made and though it be small and unnoticed in the vastness of life, yet it may be as lovely as a common daisy staring cheerfully upwards among its fellows in a white-starred field. To brood on death is idle, it is the last stronghold of fear. Death's triumph is assured, we need therefore waste no time in morbid gloating on his victories. We want to defeat death, so far as in us lies, but the fear of death plays less and less part in determining our conduct and beliefs. Nor is it a source of so much unhappy thought as it used to be when judgment and hell-fire added to its terrors. We live our life, and do our work, that we must relinquish both in death matters nothing to the universe of which we are a part. That life goes on here, or anywhere, should be sufficient comfort for our individual loss. It is in its essence such a gallant phenomenon, beauty that perishes, life that dies that we are sustained and borne onward by an almost unwilling admiration in spite of our terrors."

Published as a public service by

THE WELCH GRAPE JUICE COMPANY, INC.

J. M. Kaplan, President

**THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY*
HARPER & BROTHERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

too great involvement with a milieu all diapers and modern jazz and science fiction and the squabbling for small promotions and minimum security.* To this milieu and to the New Men who inhabit it, Mr. Pritchett remains immune; and the apparently unlimited social range of his character portraits breaks down here. The sailor and the pawnbroker, the country doctor and the hard-drinking gentry he treats play roles that seem already a little dated, almost historical. Some of the stories in the present collection were written in the 30's, others just before and during the Second World War; some appear to be quite recent, but all look backward for setting and in manner as well as in scope and ambition; so that not merely such accounts of the business world of Mr. Pritchett's youth as "It May Never Happen," or evocations of a Europe of pre-Hitler tourism like "Handsome Is as Handsome Does," but the whole body of his work is in effect nostalgic.

I do not mean this placing of Mr. Pritchett's work to seem a total evaluation. I find his stories (to him "the only kind of writing that has given me great pleasure") the most impressive part of his work. His novel *Dead Man Leading* remains in my memory as an especially successful and moving attempt to explore the kind of mind that itself likes to explore unmapped territories; but I do not have a sense of Mr. Pritchett as a real novelist. He seems to me most at home in such longish fictions as "Handsome Is as Handsome Does," or "The Spanish Virgin," a very early story not included in the present selection—I suppose because its occasional gaucherie or its "experimental" air are no longer congenial to Mr. Pritchett.

Mr. Pritchett's stories are generally characterized by the tension between a certain sense of confidence and good humor which persists in almost all of them and their themes, which are concerned with the failure of love and trust, the betrayal of the heart by the flesh, our mutual inscrutability. The melancholy aspect of Mr. Pritchett's *donnés* is emphasized by the descriptive metaphors which claim attention everywhere in his prose, sometimes violently enough to threaten the ideal of balance and ease he otherwise proposes: "The roads . . . like slugs, oozy and gleaming in the cold"; "he stood there . . . like a man drowning and screaming for help in two feet of water and wondering why the crowd is laughing"; "my first sight of Mr. Phillimore suggested the frantic, yelping, disorganized expression of a copulating dog." If there is a comic note in this, it is the note of grotesquerie in the manner of Faulkner or Dostoevsky or Dickens. Where Mr. Pritchett's vision is most particular and precise it is most grim; where it is most general it approaches the benign. If he finally is a humorous writer, it is perhaps because he nurtures a special sort of sentimentality, a faith in the over-all goodness and strength of people, though he portrays them individually as inevitably blind or spiteful or weak. Sometimes it is hard to believe what he is saying against what his story is trying to say; but he rejects the tragic because he is afraid of being betrayed into the bitter—and bitterness he tells us, in his remarks on Orwell, is likely to be untrue. There is real justification in ending the present volume with the story called "Sense of Humour," which closes on a couple wreathed in grins as they drive together in the hearse that contains the body of the man their love has driven to his death.

Angus Wilson deals with precisely the world that escapes Mr. Pritchett, which is to say, a world very like my own. Indeed Mr. Pritchett, hailing Mr. Wilson's book, speaks of him as seeing England with "a foreign eye." Actually, the mode of seeing and rendering in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* as in Mr. Wilson's earlier novel *Hemlock and After* and in his short stories, is by no means "foreign," continuing a native English tradition of nervous, overbred, effete malice, which goes back to the early Huxley and Waugh, and beyond them to Ronald Firbank and Oscar Wilde. In Mr. Wilson, as in some of his literary ancestors, a special degree of this malice and of the wit it engenders is reserved for marriage and especially for women. "They did not seem the two women with whom he was most intimate, but rather two repellent black shapes from a nightmare," Mr. Wilson writes, betraying the horror behind the satire that makes of Inge Middleton, wife of the central character of this sprawling novel, a monstrous travesty of female charm and flesh, a gross caricature of all that is silly and cruel in the maternal.

There is, then, nothing new, much less "foreign," in the style of Mr. Wilson or in his angle of vision; it is all "camp" of the sort to which British literature has accommodated it-

*See Richard Chase's "Middlebrow England" in the September 1956 number.—Ed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CEJWIN CAMPS
39th Year PORT JERVIS, N.Y. Est. 1919
PROGRESSIVE, EDUCATIONAL, NON-COMMERCIAL CAMPS
Ideal for Jewish Boys and Girls, 5 to 16
Land and water sports; aesthetic activities; resident doctors, nurses; Sabbath, dietary laws observed; cultural influences.
Rates: $445. Send for descriptive brochure PLaza 7-5545
A. P. Schoolman A. P. Gannes, Dir. 71 W. 47th St., New York 36

self for decades now. But *what* Mr. Wilson sees, as opposed to how he sees it, is a world quite different from that entered by, say, Mr. Waugh's Basil Seal; and his cast of characters is the product of quite special and recent events. It is precisely the crumbling world of upper middle class culture at the moment of its decisive encounter with mass culture that Mr. Wilson renders, a world which he had ample opportunity to observe with an amused and charmingly spiteful eye during his years in charge of the reading room of the British Museum. In the four hundred pages of *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* the New Conservative, the New Factory Manager, the New ("red-brick") Academic, the New (mass-communications) Politician weave their way among the survivors: a handful of gentlemen-Dons, a cracked lady Professor of Medieval History, a standard-model German pedant, a female historical novelist, a would-be *grande dame* organizing the village for Christmas festivities. Around these cluster the ghosts of the recent past, Freud and Marx and Neville Chamberlain and T. E. Hulme; and nurtured by them flourish the parasites proper to their weaknesses: tough homosexual boys; juicy, intellectualoid secretaries aspiring to become Someone's mistress; a charlady out of Dickensian stock; even an American Ph.D. candidate looking for inside gossip to eke out a thesis: "I am devoting the major part of my thesis to D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis . . . whose work in retrospect, appears, to my generation at least, to reflect a seriousness and a final significance which criticism today teaches us is the only criterion of literary merit. . . . I am a graduate of Minnesota University and North-Western University. I have majored in aesthetics, music and literature. . . . I have attended courses in creative writing."

The point beneath the satire is a familiar one, the upper-class contempt for the "seriousness" and the thirst for "significance" of the disinherited, American or lower class, now moving into the universities to claim their share in a culture formerly reserved for gentlemen. The final joke is that Mr. Wilson is himself betrayed by the temper of the times (when even Waugh has fallen into straight-faced piety) into his own pursuit of "seriousness" and "significance." In this novel he has attempted to go beyond the scope of his early work, those acid and delicate vignettes as charming as intelligent gossip, to create a major novel—complete with a list of the numerous characters in order of appearance, a couple of pseudo-historical appendices, indeed, all the outward symbols of the Victorian thickness of texture for which he is apparently trying. Beyond satire and grace, Mr. Wilson has obviously told himself, the moment demands a fully articulated plot with the traditional reversals and recognitions. Was the phallic image in the tomb of Bishop Eorpwald planted there by the sadistic son of its discoverer? Did that discoverer know of the hoax and conceal it? Should Gerald Middleton years later betray the memory of that discoverer, his former teacher, by telling the truth?

In the end, it all seems factitious, a manufactured frame not quite counterfeiting a full vision of life, despite the attendant swarm of clergymen, old retainers, civil servants, parliamentary scandals, wives and mistresses. And at the moment of the Happy Ending (even this Mr. Wilson has not been able to eschew) it becomes not only factitious but false; we cannot quite believe in the baffled, aging Professor breaking finally from his cannibalistic wife and being restored to life as editor and scholar, while his dipsomaniac former mistress is improbably reclaimed by Alcoholics Anonymous. Not the logic of life or even of the plot demands such a denouement, but only the interests of the sentimental point: that in the old-fashioned academic gentleman, the scholar-aesthete, there resides still a respect for fact, an abstract commitment to truth quite capable of bringing some order and coherence to a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society given up to lies and opportunism. Interestingly enough, not only the businessman and the TV rabble-rouser, the ambitious clergyman and the peasant out to get rich, but the artist, too, is exposed as shoddy beside the academic touchstone of Gerald Middleton. Three of the blindest characters in the book are writers, and though two are mere purveyors of popular entertainment (and, besides, one a woman, the other French—which is to say, not *quite* human for Mr. Wilson)—the third is a poet of the school of Eliot.

Such denouement-juggling and moral-mongering are not really Mr. Wilson's forte; but I am pleased to say that around and above plot and point the amiable nastiness we know and admire in his stories continues to play. Especially when we are introduced to the world of Vin Salad and Larrie Rourke, male tarts of various degrees of refinement on the make in a world left wide open by the collapse of class, one has the sense of a scene and talent matched at last. There is a ferocity and a pity behind the portraits from this milieu, a true humor and honesty that fail to function in the intended big scenes of moral decision and regeneration. I suppose that is why one remembers Vin Salad calling out, "It won't take a sec.," as he stands on a flight of steps "in black crepe-de-chine pajamas, a jade-green silk dressing gown, held tightly round him . . . his face . . . covered in vanishing cream," while the figure of Gerald Middleton, his back stiffening slightly, is lost in the mists of his imputed nobility.

The Jesuits

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA. By JAMES BRODRICK, S.J. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. 372 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by WERNER COHN

THE Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuit order, seems to have been fated for a special role in Jewish history. Or one might put it the other way round: directly or indirectly, Jews have frequently played an important part in Jesuit history.

The founding of the Jesuit order by Ignatius Loyola in 1534 was an act of the Counter-Reformation, a Catholic response not only to the external power of Protestantism, but also to the weaknesses inside the Church that accounted for much of the appeal of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. Ignatius Loyola is now a saint in the Catholic calendar, but in many ways he might be called a Protestant religious personality. Most especially is this true, perhaps when we consider his great concern with individual piety and his efforts to rescue religious devotion from impersonal and highly institutionalized ecclesiastical organization There was something "charismatic" about Loyola's approach to religion, something that uncovered the spark of the individual God-man relationship underneath the worldly panoply and apparatus of the Church.

Of the seven men who originally formed the Jesuit order, at least one, and possibly two, came from families that had been converted from Judaism. In the first few decades of the organization's existence, many other New Christians of Jewish origin entered it. But in 1592, fifty-eight years after St. Ignatius and his six companions had taken their original vows in a chapel on Montmartre in Paris, Jesuit General Aquaviva saw fit to prohibit further admission of anyone in whose family Jewish blood could be detected. This restriction was later modified to allow the admission of those with a Christian background of at least five generations, but the principle of the ban was retained by the Jesuits, in one form or another, for almost four hundred years. It took the revulsion against Hitlerism to eliminate all such racial bans, in 1946.

However, the ambivalent relations of Jews and Jesuits are barely indicated by this background of fact. It was myth, both popular and esoteric, much more than fact, that connected the two. The myth that the Jesuits "had always best represented, both in the written and spoken word, the anti-Semitic school of the Catholic clergy," is perpetuated by many a Jewish writer, including Ismar Elbogen, in *A Century of Jewish Life,* and Hannah Arendt, from whose *Origins of Totalitarianism* the above is quoted.

A COMMON fallacy of liberal historiography—a bias which sees all conservative politics as implicitly or explicitly anti-Semitic—accounts for many of the allegations about Jesuit anti-Semitism. Historically, the order has been interested in politics and social problems, and during the 19th century many Jesuits were active in conservative and monarchist movements. This was especially so at the time of the Dreyfus case in France, and that case is frequently

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Extra Vacation At No Extra Cost

In the world's largest transatlantic fleet headed by the two largest superliners, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary, you can count on the widest choice of ships and sailing dates. Special attention to dietary needs and facilities for worship. A superb *extra* vacation to begin and end your visit to Europe!

Cunard Prepaid Plan brings your relatives all the way to U.S.A.

If you can't get away this year, bring your relatives to America! Westbound Thrift Season rates to May 31 and from Nov. 1; eastbound, from Sept. 1. Just buy a prepaid ticket. Cunard takes care of everything—transportation, guidance through customs, immigration, stopovers—even out-of-pocket expenses en route.

Regular weekly sailings all year

New York to Cherbourg, Havre, Southampton and Liverpool—a wonderful opportunity to visit London or Paris en route to destination. See your travel agent *now*.

GO CUNARD
Getting There is Half the Fun!

CUNARD LINE, 25 B'WAY AND 441 PARK AVE., N. Y. C.

used to document the charges of anti-Semitism against the order. What people forget is that the Jesuits, then as always, remained consistent opponents of the "racial" kind of anti-Semitism that was rampant on the plebeian right. (In the Hitler period, their opposition to it was often maintained at considerable risk.) That certain anti-Jewish feelings and prejudices were current among Jesuits, and that these probably continue, is undeniable; but in this respect the Jesuits do not greatly differ from many other people in the Christian world.

A second, contrary, myth holds that the Jesuits are a Jewish conspiracy against Protestant Christianity. This idea, popularized by the psychotic German General Ludendorff, became something of an official dogma under the Nazis. A delusion that fitted into the general rather paranoid pattern of Nazi ideology, it perhaps found some acceptance because the popular imagination so frequently connected Jesuit with Jew on the basis of certain observable similarities: the Jesuits were international; they spoke Latin among themselves, and seemed to stand outside the conventional bonds of nationality. And compared to the members of other Catholic orders, Jesuit priests have a certain sophistication about them which is connected not only with their famous emphasis on education, but also with their interest in things social and political.

There are good reasons, then, for Jews to be interested in the Jesuits. One of the ways to approach a study of them—not necessarily the best way, perhaps—is through this biography of St. Ignatius Loyola.

Possibly in anticipation of further volumes, Father Brodrick's book deals only with Loyola's life prior to his founding of the Jesuit order. Those years were critical ones for the Church; rocked by corruption from within and Lutheranism from without, it responded in Spain with the Inquisition, which it tried to extend elsewhere. Loyola himself, during the height of his most orthodox period, was imprisoned because his great personal devotion and piety made him suspect to an an institution-minded hierarchy. But the fire and mysticism of the heretical *illuminati* were coupled in him with an ingrained tendency to submit to authority. He "submitted," reports Father Broderick, "as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he always did when the voice of properly constituted authority spoke." And his submissiveness is most striking in those cases in which he was unjustly persecuted by the Inquisition. His attitude to those of its agents into whose hands he fell is almost reminiscent of *Darkness at Noon*.

The author of this biography stands on the side of authority in a less complicated way than did his subject. "Considering everything," writes Father Brodrick, "the Inquisition showed remarkable lenience to those anarchists in faith and morals, among whom were many religious, provided that they amended their way." Nor does the drama of Loyola's early years come through fully under Father Brodrick's pen. Loyola's difficulties with the ecclesiastical authorities are pictured in a tendentious and simplified manner to give the impression that they were merely the result of misunderstandings or of a lack of maturity on Loyola's part.

These difficulties apparently had a real enough basis, and not only for Loyola, but to some extent for modern Jesuits too. The unworldly devotion implicit in their vows of obedience and poverty seems to put them in a special relation to authority and institutions. Jesuits are beings set apart, and do not partake of the world in quite the way that other representatives of institutionalized religion do. (Perhaps it is this very apartness which makes some Jews find the Jesuits so interesting.) The author of this biography, a Jesuit himself, does not make enough of this aspect of Loyola's personal precedent and influence, except in ways so obvious as to conceal rather than illuminate the saintly nature of the man.

His mystical experiences and psychological quirks are described in excessively literal—and, it would seem to me, unsympathetic—terms. Several incidents read as if they had been lifted from psychiatric case histories. Loyola was indeed "peculiar," but it would seem that a Jesuit biographer, of all people, should have been able to do more with his peculiarities than report them in the style of the clinical psychologist.

WHY should this virtually official history of the founder of the Company of Jesus have such an embarrassed tone? Is it the ordinary discomfort of the conventional-minded disciple of a later day when facing the shocking originality of the highly unconventional master? In view of the fact that the modern Jesuit order—despite the institutionalized framework of its existence—has retained a great deal of the "special" flavor attaching to the personality of its founder, this explanation does not seem satisfactory.

The embarrassment about Loyola revealed in this book, it seems to me, might well express a sort of embarrassment with *himself* on the part of the modern Jesuit. His situation is, after all, a contradictory one: by virtue of his social, political, and educational activities and his official status as priest in the Catholic world, he is very much part of the general worldliness of the Church. But by virtue of the radicalness of his personal life—his self-denying vows being often maintained in an emotional and intellectual atmosphere of considerable intensity—he is far from being "of this world." The difficulty of the Jesuit, perhaps, is that he must be *both* priest and monk, and that the two roles conflict with each other in his case as they do not in that of most other religious functionaries. And it is this conflict, one surmises, which might well account for Father Brodrick's embarrassment.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI, assistant professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew Union College, is a regular contributor to our pages.

CLEMENT GREENBERG is an associate editor of COMMENTARY. He is the author of books on Matisse and Miró.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER is a leading authority on the history of Nazism. Articles and book reviews by him have appeared previously in COMMENTARY.

LESLIE A. FIEDLER's literary and political writings are widely known.

WERNER COHN teaches sociology at Northland College in Wisconsin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

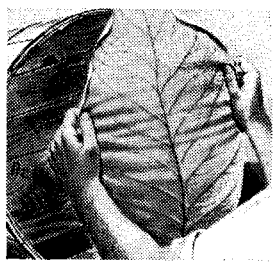
Viceroy has the smoothest taste of all!

© 1957, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp.

Only Viceroy takes the 3 steps that lead to smoother smoking!

1. Smooth!

From the finest tobacco grown, Viceroy selects only the Smooth Flavor Leaf. No other will do!



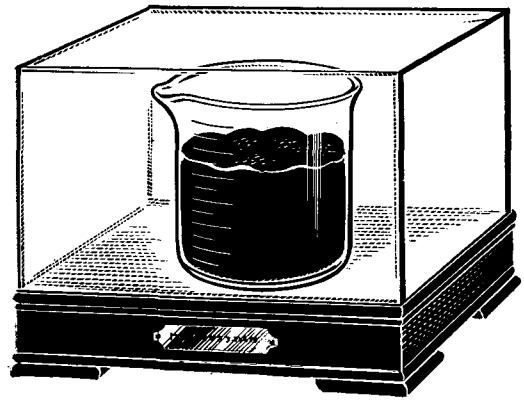
2. Extra Smooth!

Each Smooth Flavor Leaf is specially Deep-Cured, golden brown through and through, for *extra* smoothness!

3. Super Smooth!

Only Viceroy smooths each puff through *20,000 filters* made from pure cellulose—soft, snow-white, natural!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Priceless mud

The path to oil can be as deep as three miles. It is a long, grueling, expensive journey and every new tool that Amoco finds to ease the way results in greater value for the consumer.

Downward bores the drill. Raw earth threatens to cave in until another length of pipe can be lowered. There is only one means of holding back dirt and stone—by using a specially prepared mud to firm the sides of the freshly drilled hole. A priceless help!

Science works for Amoco in the field, not only in finding the best places to drill but in finding better drilling methods to sharpen efficiency and lower cost.

By seeking out and using new improvements, Amoco gets the most out of every well it drills and every barrel of oil it refines. In turn, the American motorist profits with products such as Amoco-Gas, the only unleaded motor fuel in the world.

American Oil Company AMOCO®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED